YOUR CHILDREN

MURIEL WRINCH

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YOUR CHILDREN

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SOME CHAPTERS ON EARLY HOME TEACHING AND TRAINING

WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST LESSONS

BY

MURIEL WRINCH

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THIS BOOK

(ESPECIALLY CHAPTERS I, XXX AND XXXI)

IS

DEDICATED

TO

MY DAUGHTER,
TALITHA,

IN GRATITUDE FOR ALL SHE HAS TAUGHT ME

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INTRODUCTION

In a previous book, written in collaboration with her husband, the author has dealt with the physical care of children from birth to four years of age. In this one she is concerned mainly with the mental training of the small child. A few chapters on discipline and the development of will and imagination are included, for without suitable discipline and some moral training the mother could not carry out the ideas suggested in this book, but limitations of space render a full discussion of character-building and religious training impossible, and detailed consideration of this important side of child-training must be reserved for a later work. The present book aims at answering some of the questions mothers wishing to teach their small children themselves have put to the author. She has frequently been asked to recommend a book which gives some idea of method in first lessons, but so far as she knows there is none written expressly for the average mother in the ordinary home. There are many books on child-psychology and on the training of character, and many on the physical side of child-care, but there is a dearth of books on the early training of the mind.

But although this book deals chiefly with

mental training, this does not mean that the author believes in forcing children or in encouraging them to stow away a great number of facts in the early years of their lives. These pages only suggest how little children may most easily acquire knowledge of subjects that interest them, how they may learn by experiment and suitable experience. The knowledge in itself is of little importance, but since the mental attitude of the individual is to a great extent determined by the time he is five years old and since the cultivation of intelligence adds much to the happiness of life, it is the mother's duty from the very first to encourage in the child his native desire to learn, to feed his mind on the right material in the right way and to suit the subject matter to his physiological and psychological needs. In all her work she should bear in mind the cardinal principle that it is not the amount of knowledge that a child acquires before he goes to school that matters, but the degree of his enthusiasm to learn.

Each individual mother will teach her children differently. Her teaching will be influenced by her own tastes and interests and the amount of her knowledge. The book is, therefore, suggestive rather than informational. In the chapter on Nature Study, for instance, no attempt is made to give a syllabus of what the child under five should know, but suggestions for the *trend* of the teaching are given and certain principles upon which it should be based are enunciated.

Some of the chapters of the book have appeared in article form in *Good Housekeeping*, *Eve*, *The Quiver*, *Woman's Pictorial*, *Ladies' Field* and *Child Education*, and are here included, all revised and in some cases entirely re-written, by courteous permission of the Editors of these journals. The material of two chapters has been broadcast as talks from 2 LO. The author has received many letters from mothers on the subjects dealt with in these pages and she has tried throughout to keep in mind the difficulties with which they contend and the circumstances under which they work.

May, 1926.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR MOTHERS

" The interests of childhood are broad as those of the race itself. There are no limits to the growth of the individual who seeks to serve youth."

" Home should furnish the child with a clue, a thread, which mingling later with the results of his own spiritual discoveries, will become the guiding line of life and reveal his place in nature."

MIRIAM VAN WATERS. *Youth in Conflict.*

" No intelligence which a woman possesses needs remain unused in the handling of a family."

" Women seem to need a long period of loving and caring for a family to round out a deeply significant life."

EARL BARNES. *Woman in Modern Society.*

" Not leaving the child in peace is the greatest evil of present day methods in training children."

" Only by keeping oneself in constant process of growth, under the constant influence of the best things in one's own age, does one become a companion half-way good enough for one's children."

"To bring up a child means carrying one's soul in one's hand, setting one's feet in a narrow path; it means never placing ourselves in danger of meeting that cold look on the part of the child that tells us without words that he finds us insufficient and unreliable."

"It takes tremendous power to do one's duty to a single child. This by no means signifies giving up to the child every hour of one's time, but it does mean that our soul is to be filled by the child just as the man of science is possessed by his investigations and the artist by his work. The child should be in one's thoughts when one is sitting at home or walking along the road, when one is lying down or when one is standing up. This devotion, much more than the hours immediately given to one's children, is the absorbing thing; the occupation that which makes an earnest mother always go to any external activity with divided soul and dissipated energy."

ELLEN KEY. *Education.*

YOUR CHILDREN

CHAPTER I

CONCERNING THE MOTHER'S PSYCHOLOGY

CHILDREN, a contemporary writer has remarked, are not the result of marriage; marriage is the result of children. Every parent, to be successful at the work, must realise the significance and the truth of this statement. The child's primary need in the early years of life is a stable environment in which to rest, an environment in which he can find some protection from dangers which he is at present unfitted to meet. Monogamic marriage evolved in human society primarily in order that this need of the child might be fulfilled. With the further evolution of the human race it took on other functions as well, and of course if life-long union is to be entirely satisfactory there must be love on both sides, but the fundamental object of healthy marriage, both from the biological and psychological point of view, must always be the production of young human beings and the provision of a peaceful, orderly environment—the home—in which they may grow to splendid maturity.

In the provision of this environment, the mother plays an extremely important part. It has been found as a rule the most profitable arrangement for the male partner in the business

to work outside the home and the woman within it. To the mother, then, as a general rule, falls the work of organising the home and ordering her children's early lives. When the normal woman marries the normal man, under the circumstances usually existing to-day, therefore, she expresses implicitly, whether she is actually conscious of doing so or not, her intention of becoming an educator. It is essential for her to regard this work as perfectly definite, to be raised to a standard of professional efficiency and to be discharged in as business-like a manner as any other job.

If she takes this view, home life will at once be raised to a higher standard. The mother, unlike most workers, is responsible to no employer and is free to arrange her day's work as she thinks best. But just because this is so, there is often a disastrous tendency to let things slide. If the mother realises, however, that her job is a perfectly definite one, and if she realises further that the view of home life the children absorb in their youth they will be inclined to carry into their own homes, this tendency is overcome immediately. The time-table of the home will be planned out as systematically as that of the office. There will be an atmosphere of quiet industry in nursery and sitting-room (to which the children contribute their quota); tasks will not be allowed to accumulate and the mother will get quite definitely finished every day and find leisure really to know her children. Many women complain that "women's work is never

done"—a doctrine which has often worked great psychological harm in the homes of their daughters—but by this is often meant, in reality, that they ever have uncompleted tasks weighing upon their minds and are never wholly at rest in consequence, even after the last meal of the day is finished. How can a woman never definitely taking proper relaxation be a fit educator for small children? How can she ever establish real contact with them in an atmosphere of unrest? My parent readers may perhaps think I have harped for long enough on what seems a detail, but too often I have seen immense unhappiness caused because the mother could not regard herself as a professional worker, could not bring herself to recognise that her work in life is as definite as that of any other worker, and could never dissociate herself, as other workers do, from the petty cares of everyday work.

With the conception of motherhood as a definite profession, the attitude to the children also will change and a true relation between children and home will be established. The children will no longer be merely an "extra," little people holding up the day's work, but an essential part of everyday life. Their reactions will be studied as part of the day's work; the naughty child, instead of being merely a nuisance, will present a problem of psychological interest that must be faced and solved. Too many women harbour a vague sense of grievance that their children are so much *trouble*. They could

not if they realised that the education of children is their primary work in life, that maturity had hardly begun for them until children came to force them to shoulder definitely the privileges and responsibilities of adulthood.

It is necessary, above all things, to be really adult in one's attitude towards one's children. This seems an obvious statement, yet psycho-analysts could tell of many cases where the mother is still in the infantile stage of emotional development—loth, albeit unconsciously, to assume real responsibility for other lives, anxious to be cherished rather than to cherish, desirous of occupying the centre of the stage rather than content and happy to stand back and watch the new generation taking the boards. Every true mother must realise that the children are *the* important people, for they are the potential creators of the world of to-morrow. It is necessary for their healthy growth that they shall not *perceive* our interest in them ; it is necessary for their full development that we should have our own interests, that we be satisfied emotionally and spiritually in our own lives, instead of seeking to find outlet in theirs ; it is of vital importance that we should be able, as Dr. Miriam van Waters says in her new book, " Youth in Conflict," " to love children . . . in the big disinterested biological way of unselfishly rearing a child to physical and mental health, without demanding in return some subtle payment that for ever robs the young of full growth to inde-

pendent adulthood"; but it must be clearly recognised that the true welfare of the child must always be the first consideration. Dr. Crichton Miller expressed the same idea rather differently when he said—I forget the exact words—that one is only mature emotionally when one is able to take the parental attitude to life. Every adult person to be genuinely happy must have grown through the infantile stage of development when interest is centred in the self, when protection and sympathy are sought from others rather than being freely given out to other people and causes. But though it is desirable that everyone adult in years should also be adult psychologically whatever his work, it is particularly vital in the case of the mother. If she is infantile psychologically, the chances are that her children will be. And to carry one's infantile desires and satisfactions into adult life is the surest way to spiritual death.

The mother then must be adult herself and training her children for adult life. She must prepare them gradually, steadily, wisely, from the cradle to meet responsibilities, *to become independent of her*. It is easy to delight in the child's appealing helplessness, it is hard to resist the temptation to "keep him a baby" as long as possible, but the tendency must be overcome. Since the child is bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, it is natural that a woman's emotions should centre themselves very persistently in him, that she should tend to regard him as an exten-

sion of her own personality, but this is not a desirable attitude. From the first, the mother must cultivate respect for the child as a separate personality. In the happy phrase of Dr. van Waters, the true mother "does not try to dominate but to *nourish.*" To nourish effectually one must be eager to witness growth.

If this is clearly understood, children will be allowed to do far more for themselves than is now usual, with benefit not only to themselves, but to their mothers. I know a mother who still bathes her boy of eight on the grounds that he would not clean himself properly. She does not realise that she is keeping the child back in his development. Nor does she see how needlessly she is fatiguing herself and adding quite an unjustifiable burden to the ordinary day's work.

Take another instance. How often do we discourage a child from undertaking some difficult project? Our conscious reason is that we are afraid he may not succeed. Unconsciously, perhaps, we are afraid he *may* succeed and, succeeding, grow beyond the need of our sheltering care.

Or again—it is the lot of every mother sometimes to have to deal with a child bent on getting his own way. Her reactions will be much influenced if she is able to take a detached and professional view of her work. A self-willed child is often dealt with far too harshly because the mother is, unconsciously, annoyed that *as an individual* he is in opposition to herself. If she

clearly realised that the child *is* an individual, not merely an extension of her own personality, she would realise his right to independent action, and she would be able to consider whether or not he is developing as he should. If in such a case the mother is free from conflict within herself, able to regard the problem as an intellectual one, she is not harassed or worried by the child's reactions, but only concerned with helping him.

Let the mother once realise the dignity of her work as educator, let her once realise that the rearing of children and the provision of a splendid environment for them is a job to be raised to a standard of professional efficiency, let her understand that the training of her children's minds is as important a part of her work as the building of their bodies, and she will no longer lament the monotony and drudgery, the lack of intellectual interests, in her work. "Most women," says Earl Barnes in his book, "Woman in Modern Society," "if they are willing to pay the same price for a significant family life that they so gladly pay for professional success, will find their way open to live the whole of life. Why is it that women count it an honour to work and starve for an art but dishonour to undergo privations for their children?" These words are worth pondering. It is possible for the women in the little houses to live the whole of life if only they will adjust their attitude to the wonder and possibilities of the task before them as the early educators of the human race.

CHAPTER II

THE MOTHER AS EDUCATOR

EVERY mother knows that her work as educator involves far more than mere teaching, and runs through all her care of her children. Education, as Herbert Spencer used to say, is preparation for complete living, and as such includes not only mental, but also moral and physical training. Every true mother will know, too, that the school can but supplement the early educational work done at home. The veriest baby who attends kindergarten is already partially educated. His contact with his mother, or with her deputy, during the first few years, has caused him to establish habits of thought and action which will persist through life. The mother of the child is largely responsible for his mental outlook. She is almost wholly responsible for the formation of his character. By the age of four he has learned to be either obedient or disobedient, cheerful or sulky, independent or helpless, enthusiastic about the world around him or lethargic in his acceptance of everyday life. This is directly the result of the work of the woman who has stood in the mother's relation to the child.

All through past ages the education of the young children of the race was a recognised part

of woman's work. To the mother in primitive times was given the responsibility of the upbringing both of the boys and girls until they were nine or ten years of age. In ancient Greece and Rome the mother of the household devoted a great deal of attention to her children until they went to school. In the middle centuries the sons of noble houses were sent to act as pages to the châtelaines that the boys might learn from these great ladies the graces and the art of living. Froebel, the educational pioneer of the nineteenth century, proclaimed the importance of the mother's influence in early education.

And there are very good reasons why the mother is the best educator and the home the best environment for the child, at least up to the age of six or seven, good reasons why "experts" can never quite take her place.

The greatest need of the child during the early years of his life in the big, new, puzzling world is a sense of security and stability. This, above all things, the mother can supply. The mother is a comfortable, there-all-the-time person, who can always be relied upon in emergencies. The child knows instinctively that she has a personal interest in his welfare, and his trust in her gives him a quiet feeling of serenity, so that he can begin to build his house of life with a mind at peace. There is no doubt that the lives of many modern children are rendered much too complicated by the number of the people in authority over them—nurses, governesses, teachers of

different subjects—all with different ideals and different outlook.

It is noteworthy that the child's own interest lies in the home. Froebel showed how the child's interests, at first focussed in himself, may be led gradually outwards in ever-widening circles. He becomes interested in the house and furniture, in the preparation of meals, in the kitchen utensils, in the work of the inmates of the house. A little later he extends his interest to the garden and the work of the gardener, later still to the fields that surround his home, the village or town in which he lives. The child should be allowed to explore the possibilities of the home, and to understand the principles governing this little community, before being brought into contact with a more complicated environment.

As he grows from helpless babyhood to physical independence the toddler's first wish is "to help mother." In our village there is a tow-headed baby, a particularly delightful specimen of the two-year-old. "Where's Hilda?" I asked her ten-year-old sister the other day as I passed the cottage. "Hilda? Oh, she's upstairs helping mother to make the beds," said the little girl. Thus is Hilda learning to fit into her own place in life—she is beginning to take her tiny share in the work of the house. Her little efforts may hinder rather than help her mother, yet it is through making these efforts that Hilda finds, quite unconsciously, her place in the home community.

We must remember before consigning the education of our babies too readily to the school, that the young child learns incidentally rather than formally. The world around him is still new to the toddler, and he learns all the time. It is not natural to him to go to a special room to learn handwork and nature-study, to dance and run for three hours, and then to spend the rest of the day in mental inactivity. No mother who sends her child to a kindergarten should consider that she has then settled once and for all the question of his early education. She must apply the principles of the kindergarten for the rest of the day. She must remember also that there is some work which the mother can do for her children which no one else can do.

She can help them to build up strong, sturdy bodies. Little mental or moral progress is possible unless good physical habits are established. Most intelligent, conscientious mothers do not fail in this side of their work. They understand the importance of right food and exercise, abundant sleep and fresh air.

One important part of physical education is, however, often overlooked. The mother's work is also to train the child to take a healthy and reverent view of the functions of the body. Let her teach him to take a pride in sturdy muscles; let her teach him as soon as possible to attend to his physical needs himself, and to delight in his independence; let her teach him a few of the eurhythmic exercises of Jacques Dalcroze to help

him to walk gracefully. Above all, let her encourage him to observe the facts of Nature. The child who has seen the dark, sticky leaves of the horse-chestnut bud unfurl to show the tender leaves within, the child who has seen the little green seeds in the seed box of a flower, grows gradually to an understanding of the beautiful relation which exists between the human mother and baby.

We hear so much nowadays about the sex education of our children, but in reality the little ones need far more a careful, tender presentation of the facts of motherhood. Sex as such does not interest the little child, but early he shows a natural curiosity as to whence he came. Education of this type cannot be given by an " expert." Only the educator who is with the child in his every-day life can choose the right moment to help the child to this knowledge.

Another very important piece of home education is the training of the child in the habit of success. Too often when even small children come to school they have already formed the habit of sitting down under their difficulties. This is partly because they have found the duties of the grown-up world too complicated for their understanding and too arduous for their strength, partly because they have not been given tasks which help them to develop concentration and will power. By giving little children at home small pieces of work to do which it is well within their powers to attain—the care of some animal,

little commissions to do—the mother can help them to gain confidence in their own powers. If she knows, too, of the work of Froebel and Dr. Montessori she will be able to provide them with mental occupation suitable to their stage of development, which will help them to develop will power and independence in tackling difficulties. Little children have been known to practise Madame Montessori's exercise with her wooden cylinders *forty* times when they were given the material without being formally set to the task. The secret of the training of the child in concentration and persistence in the early years is to provide for him material which interests him so much that he develops the habit of attention almost unconsciously. The old-fashioned disciplinarian spoke of "breaking the child's will." The modern educationist knows that the child's will is waiting to be *formed* during the first few years of life.

The mother's attitude to mental occupation is of great importance. The small child is naturally intensely interested in and enthusiastic about life. If his parents are keenly interested in nature-study, music, reading, the child's mental outlook will be fresh and keen. When the time comes for "lessons," he will tackle them eagerly, especially if he has been grounded in the various subjects at home. If the mother develops the child's interest in literature and books—by telling him wonderful myths and weaving for him beautiful stories, for instance—

not only is she developing his imagination and helping him to form sources of entertainment within himself, she is also fostering in him the desire to read. He has a real eagerness to discover the meaning of the strange black marks on the page of the book, and consequently when he begins to learn gives all his energy to doing so. Or again, if the mother begins to teach the child to sing little songs in the nursery, teaches him to march and run in tune to music, helps him to interpret it by movements of his body, the child beginning piano or violin lessons later on will be willing to practise scales and exercises because music already means something in his life.

These few examples of the scope of the mother's work in mental training, in developing concentration and will-power and eagerness to learn show how closely mental and moral training are connected. Moral training is certainly not the least important side of early education.

There are certain qualities which we can expect even in the tiniest child. Cheerfulness, kindness, obedience he can show, and he will be quick to develop these traits if he sees cheerfulness, kindness and obedience practised in the home. "Good home training," says Dr. Lyttelton, the late headmaster of Eton, "means bringing up children in surroundings which quietly and persistently illustrate the principles taught by word of mouth."

The teaching of obedience, in particular, is important. Many children get the idea that

obedience is expected only of children, and they long to be grown up because they imagine they will be free from the shackles of law. But if their parents are humble enough to show their children that they, too, are striving to please God, that they, too, sometimes find it difficult to do the right thing, but that they *do* try to do it, then the child will grow up filled with a reverence for the law, which will help him to make a success of life in the deepest sense of the word.

There is no doubt that the most fundamental principle in moral training is to help the child to understand that his mother and father are working *with* him in order to help him to develop as well as he possibly can. Early moral education is positive in its character. The ideal mother provides an environment in which the child has favourable opportunities to develop his good points; she gives the bad traits no chance to develop. She helps the child to *practise* real religion in his own life even before he is old enough to appreciate definite instruction. Further, her knowledge of her own character and that of her husband places her in a favourable position to create an environment suitable for her own particular child.

The work of the mother is, indeed, skilled work. Not only must her character be such that she can demonstrate in actual practice to the child the great principles of religion, concentration, industry, she teaches by word of mouth; she also needs a definite mental equipment if she is

to tackle her work intelligently. She needs knowledge of physiology, child nature and psychology. She needs also elementary knowledge of educational method and of the principles of Froebel and Montessori if she is to teach the child nature study, music and handwork in the early years before he goes to school.

There is really no work like motherhood, interpreted in its wildest sense, for the intelligent and educated woman. The bringing up of children satisfies her emotionally, spiritually, intellectually. Of course if a woman looks after her children only from the physical point of view, the work degenerates into drudgery; but if she brings knowledge and skill to her task she finds an outlet for all sides of her nature. Could there be any subject more interesting than the nature of play to the theorist? Or any theme more engrossing than the ethics of punishment to the moralist? Or any occupation more fascinating to the craftswoman than basketry or weaving or beadwork? All these subjects have a direct bearing on the education of young children. Could there be any stimulus more valuable to the development and strengthening of character than the thought that a child takes you as his guide in all he does? Could there be any greater emotional happiness for a woman than to see her baby taking his first little halting steps or her child reading his first word from a book? There is no interest that cannot be satisfied through your work with your children;

no piece of knowledge that cannot be used ; no activity or energy that cannot be utilised.

The feminists proclaim on all sides to-day that every woman has a right to individuality, to freedom, to self-expression. This is true. Every woman has this right. She must be free. She must be on equality with man.

But what is the basis of these much-vaunted " rights " ? Independence is a bigger thing than mere economic independence ; it is the power to do work of real value in the world in return for the gift of life and happiness and a certain measure of freedom from care. Equality does not mean mere similarity ; Woman can do some things better than Man, just as Man can do some things better than Woman. The husband and wife who truly believe in equality go into a partnership in which each brings different qualifications, each does different work for the firm. The woman who provides real nurture for her children cannot be " lower " or " inferior " to the man who makes possible the environment in which they can be nurtured. As for self-expression, the individual who does work for which he is specially fitted and supplements his natural gifts by reading and observation and training *is* expressing himself.

There is an idea abroad to-day that work in the home is of a lower order intellectually than work outside. But that is only true if the woman in the home takes a narrow view of her motherhood, and acts merely as the physical attendant

of her children instead of as educator. Education is a skilled job.

Let the woman who has no gift for work with children by all means use her energies in other fields. But let the woman who finds her happiness with her babies realise the dignity of her work as educator. There can be no greater vocation than that of training individuals to become good citizens, strong in body, honest and keen in mind and sturdy of character. The mother who holds these ideals before her in her labours is doing work of national importance—work, moreover, that no one else can do as well as she.

CHAPTER III

THE CHILD AT HOME

I MET two rich little girls the other day, heiresses to a vast fortune—but I felt a great pity for them. Those children are placed in an environment which forces them to build up a life of fantasy. Everything is done for them. There is a nurse to bath and dress them, an under-nurse to carry their toys when they are tired of carrying them out on their walks. There is a governess who comes to amuse them for two hours every morning. The footman, too, has certain nursery duties—it is part of James's work to remove the green cloth from the cage that hangs in the nursery window when it is time for Dicky to get up! How can the little girls avoid forming the conclusion that the world is run entirely for their benefit, that they themselves are the central figures in the drama of life?

Not many of us can provide our children with great riches, but even the poorest mother can ruin her child for life by stifling his desire for independence. It is so easily brought about—the mother does everything for the child because it is so much quicker; the child inevitably concludes that he is a little king, born to be served by other people. The trouble of half the neurasthenics of this world dates from childhood,

the time when they were given a false impression of life, and led to believe that they were born to reap the fruits of other people's labours. They emerge from the home into the far more complicated world without its walls incapable of facing life. They are not psychologically prepared to take their fair share in the work of the world, and, perhaps, they may never learn to play their part efficiently as members of the social community.

The aim of every conscientious mother should be to help her child to achieve independence, to take his rightful place as a member of the family. The child is born with a natural desire for independence. As soon as he is able to walk, almost, he tries to take part in all the activities of the household. And the normal unspoiled child loves to do everything he possibly can for himself.

The years for training him to independence are primarily the years between two and four. By the time he is three the child should be able to dress himself—his clothes should be made, of course, so that he can easily reach the fastenings —and by the time he is four he should be able to wash himself and to clean his teeth, under supervision. The training must be gradual. Of course, if a baby previously accustomed to be waited upon hand and foot is given soap and water and asked to wash, the result will be disastrous! But if from the moment he is physically able he is trained to fetch and carry carefully, he will become surprisingly efficient in a short time.

We do not give the child half enough credit for efficiency. Children in well-to-do homes frequently occupy the whole attention of a nurse until they are six or seven years old, yet I know of one crêche where the children of *four* were found, at a time of desperate staff shortage, to be of real help in attending to the three-year-olds. Four-year-old Marjorie even essayed to bath Ian, aged two! The experiment was not a success, because Ian was inclined to question the authority of his small nurse, but there was no doubt of her efficiency. This efficiency would never have been discovered had it not been for the break in the usual routine. Thus in the case of many children their powers are habitually under-estimated, and they are never called upon fully to exert themselves.

The four-year-old should be given the opportunity to take his share in the work of the household. Children in the Montessori houses and kindergartens and nursery schools of to-day lay their own meals, dust the furniture, and sweep and polish as part of their daily routine. At one toddlers' school in East London I visited I watched a tiny boy, scarcely four years old, drag a small table into the garden, scrub it, and shake his brush out afterwards in the most approved grown-up manner. Another toddler of three was sweeping up the crumbs dropped at dinner with a miniature brush and dustpan.

Of course these children learn from one another, and many children together are always a little

in advance of solitary children of the same age ; but there is no reason why the four-year-old in the ordinary house should not help to prepare his own meals and keep his own nursery tidy. I shall be told that the busy mother has not the time to allow the child to " potter about " with her. Certainly it takes more time at first to show small children how to do a thing than to do it oneself ; but if we once spend time in helping the child to learn to do up his own boots, brush his teeth, wash up his own cup, saucer and plate, we are really saving time later on as well as doing the best thing possible for him. True, at first, little accidents may occur—one or two cups and plates, for instance, may be broken—but once the child learns that breakages result from careless handling he learns to hold things more carefully. No child *wants* to hurt or break things, and it is only fair to give him a chance to learn how to handle breakable articles before scolding him for clumsiness.

It is easy to arouse the young child's interest in the domestic side of life and to encourage him to take a share in household tasks. The home is a very primitive institution, and all man's early interests are centred in it. If we wait, however, until children are nine or ten to ask them to do their share we may expect grumbles. The children's early offers of help having been refused, they tend to think that no household work should devolve upon them, and they resent having new duties suddenly allotted to them.

The very best way to train children to take their share in the work of the family community is to provide them with a room of their own when they are quite tiny and make them responsible for the care of it. In a drawing-room full of precious grown-up possessions the child may do grave mischief when he tries to dust the mantel-shelf; but in his own room, with his own simple toys and ornaments to clean, he does not hinder others, and he develops a far greater sense of responsibility than he otherwise could.

The housing problem and questions of space are very urgent in these days, but if it is impossible to provide children with a nursery or sitting-room of their own, at least we can spare them a corner of a room downstairs, and give them partial or complete charge of their own bedroom. Careful housewives will hesitate before giving the children jurisdiction over any room at all, but I have been in a room with gleaming brass and polished table and well-swept floor which is tended by children under seven.

Small brooms and brushes and dust-pans can be bought at most toy-shops, and with these implements small boys and girls find real housework much more fun than merely playing at doll's house.

A room for the children solves many other problems. The children, besides learning housecraft in their own way, are able to enjoy themselves in their own domain. Parents and children

are necessarily at different stages of development, and though they have much to give to each other it is hardly possible that they should be together the whole time without either the children limiting the activities of the parents or the parents those of the children.

Particularly from the child's point of view is it desirable that he should live as much as possible in the society of his contemporaries. His whole outlook is different from that of the adult, his needs and capabilities are different. If he is forced too soon to conform to grown-up standards the normal progress of his development will be seriously affected. Four-year-olds should have plenty of companionship. Many small friends should come into play as often as possible. This is desirable even when there are several children in one family. How much more so with that unfortunate little being, the only child!

While the children are small some supervision is, of course, necessary; but the mother or nurse in charge should keep herself in the background as far as possible. If she sits in the nursery, let her have her own table for sewing or reading, and leave the rest of the room to the child. Even better is it if she can sit in the next room within hearing in case of accident or distress, but far enough away not to interfere with the child's activities. If the nursery is suitably planned, with a good guard in front of the fire, no hanging lights, pictures hung up high on the walls well out of the way of blows, few ornaments and no

furniture which the child may pull over to his own injury, grown-up intervention should seldom be required.

The plays which children themselves invent are a most valuable stimulus to development. The kitten who plays with the cork grows into the expert mouser; the puppy who wrangles and bites gloves and slippers develops into the good house-dog. Likewise the child who plays at all the grown-up activities of life in turn—at doctors, at soldiers, funerals, shops, school, and so on—becomes an efficient adult in after years. "The child," says Dr. Drummond, "goes down on all-fours in order to find out what a dog feels like." By pretending to be all sorts of animals and people in turn, he begins to understand the inner meaning of life in its many different aspects, he develops sympathy for other individuals in the community and enlarges his personality.

It is most certainly best never to interfere in these pretence games. Though the grown-up should be able to attend a doll's tea-party or witness a nursery concert when specially invited, a too-active adult participation in imaginative play is apt to stultify the child's joy in creation. Play is a form of self-expression, and it should be allowed to remain so; too often, however, it degenerates into a form of activity in which the child expresses the ideas of the adult who takes part in his games.

What the mother *can* do with regard to her

child's play is to provide good materials A few properties—a tram conductor's outfit, a nurse's cap and apron, a little blackboard for playing at school—add life and zest to imaginative play. Big wooden boxes for the counter, cardboard wrappers and cream cartons are useful for playing shop. A sand tray with a load of sand with which the child can make illustrations for his stories, or merely play with the sand, making sand-pies for hours, should be in every home where there is a four-year-old. A big box containing odds and ends of ribbon, old reels, pieces of cardboard, sheets of coloured paper, burnt-out matches, match-boxes, scraps of material, should be in every nursery cupboard. With these the children can make little toys, developing resourcefulness and skill in their play.

Dolls, well-illustrated books, scrap-books, boxes of plasticine—all these are good toys for children of four and five. With these a child can *do* something—he can rock the doll to sleep and fashion the semblance of a house from the plasticine. Elaborate toys offering no scope for the child's creative ability are out of place. Most little children like the Montessori apparatus, and this can be made a valuable instrument of education. Ludo and lotto and dominoes are possibilities—these games are useful in helping the child to focus his early number ideas.

There are any number of intellectual and practical interests even for the small child. Nature study can be carried on in town or

country, for even in the gloomiest cities plants will grow in window-boxes and dormice can be kept in the nursery. Handwork in its many different branches—drawing, brush-work, toy-making, simple weaving—are also important in the education of the four-year-old. Stories and music, physical exercises and eurhythmics also come into his life.

With this wide and varied range of interests, with his household tasks, with his imaginative and dramatic play, four-years-old should be happy and busy enough all day. Every day will be different, for the world is new; yet every day must also be mapped out so that from the very first the child learns to conform to an orderly routine. Early childhood is the time for establishing regular habits of living. Sleep, exercise, work and play must each take their due share of time.

According to recent medical opinion, the child between one and five years of age needs fourteen hours' sleep in the twenty-four. Four-years-old should, therefore, go to bed at six o'clock and rise at seven in the morning, and he should have an hour's sleep either before or after lunch.

Plenty of fresh air and exercise are also essential. This has always been recognised, but very often in the past children have learned to dread the time for going out, because they hated the monotonous afternoon walk.

It is a mistake to give children the idea that exercise is an unpleasant necessity, and it is

a mistake which can be avoided. Gardening, for instance, appeals very much to children, and there is no reason why even a four-year-old should not plant a few little seeds and dig his own little plot after the earth has been loosened for him. There is work for him every month in the year in the garden, and it is a good idea to give the child the opportunity to do this sometimes instead of going out for a walk. Again, playing "Blind-Man's-Buff" and "Old Man," "Ticky-Ticky-Touchwood" and "Hide-and-Seek" are excellent ways of taking exercise, when there are enough children to take part in the game. On wet days there might be some marching and dancing in time to music, or some simple physical exercises such as those recommended in the "Board of Education Syllabus of Physical Education," or some kindergarten games as described in Miss Brown's book, "Child Life in Our Schools." On days when a walk is taken it is well to have a definite aim. It is so much more interesting to the child to go to the other end of the town to find out how the ash-buds are developing, or to walk to the smithy's to see a horse shod, or to the park to feed the ducks than it is "to go for a walk" merely for the sake of taking a walk. With all these different suggestions for taking exercise it should be easy enough to keep the children out of doors in fine weather for at least three hours a day even in winter.

Suppose they play in the garden for an hour after breakfast and are out in the fresh air for

two hours in the afternoon, there is then a period roughly of two waking hours in the morning and two after tea for occupations of various kinds. If nursery breakfast, which the child helps to lay and to clear away, is at eight, followed by an hour's play in the garden, it is about a quarter to ten before the child settles in the nursery. At this time he will attend to any plants he is growing in his window-boxes, see after his aquarium if he is so fortunate as to possess one, tidy the nursery and do any little household tasks for which he is responsible.

The morning is divided into two periods by lunch at eleven, and is well filled by handwork and kindergarten occupations and work with the Montessori apparatus until it is time for the morning sleep.

After tea can be made the most delightful time in the day for four-years-old. This is a time when his mother is usually able to give him her whole attention for an hour or so, and when he is able to climb into her lap to hear a story, or when she can teach him to sing little songs. This is a time also when daddy can sometimes help him to make toys—a walnut ship with paper sails to sail in the bath, a tiny cot from two match-boxes stuck at right angles one inside the other.

Supper and bed-time come all too quickly. Yet, calmed in the atmosphere of sincere evening prayers, followed by one of the old Bible stories, the little head grows heavy almost as soon as

it touches the pillow. Four-years-old has lived successfully through another day. He has worked and played and learned. And his sleep will be serene because he has lived his own little life alongside of those he loves, and he has been allowed to play his own part in the work of building up the home.

CHAPTER IV

PLAY AND PLAYTHINGS

WHAT is play ? The definition is hard to give, but I suppose the distinctive characteristic of play as opposed to work lies in its spontaneity. In its spontaneity also lies its value—a child will overcome difficulties in his play which he would never even tackle in his formal work ; the feats which take place on the football field every day, an American writer has pointed out, are really remarkable—at least, we should call them remarkable if the same effort were put into arithmetic.

Grown-ups are apt to regard the child's play as recreation and relaxation, but there is a good deal more to it than that. The importance and interest of the subject is shown by the number of men of genius who have speculated about play.

Philosophers, scientists and educationalists, artists and psychologists have pondered its meaning and function. We have the Schiller-Spencer theory, the Gross theory and many others more modern. We are told that play is preparation for life, that in play the child recapitulates the history of the race, that it is the channel through which surplus energy is discharged.

Whatever the explanation, its importance cannot be questioned. It behoves the parent to give the child plenty of opportunity to play as far as possible without interference. Robert Louis Stevenson has told us that play is the child's profession, Dr. Clouston, author of the "Hygiene of Mind," that "play is the real work of children," and Froebel has emphasised its importance in memorable words in his classic, the "Education of Man": "Play is the most characteristic, most spiritual manifestation of man in childhood. . . . The child who plays vigorously, freely and quietly, and who persists until he is thoroughly tired, will, of a certainty, grow into a capable and quietly persistent man, ready to sacrifice his own present ease when a higher good for himself and for others demands it."

In his play the child learns to concentrate his attention, to overcome difficulties without assistance. Thus it is a valuable—perhaps the most valuable—agent in the formation of steady, purposeful character. In that it provides a means of self-expression, it aids the integration of individuality. In that it gives opportunity for the repetition of the same action again and again, it favours the development of skill.

It is interesting to trace out the play-stages through which the child passes and the interest is enhanced by the fact that at each turn *individuality* peeps out. Early in life various tastes and capabilities develop, according to the character of the child.

First comes the stage of "playful experimentation." The baby learns what are the potentialities of his senses—learns to touch, to feel differences of temperature, to distinguish between different smells, to use his sense of hearing. The child, as is well-known, is born deaf, but when he is even two or three days old he gives evidence of noticing sound. Preyer, the great observer of babyhood, tells us that his boy gave every sign of appreciating melody at seven weeks old. This is rather precocious, but the development of the senses is certainly remarkably rapid.

Sight, especially, is a source of great pleasure to the child. He will play with the light, blinking his eyes and opening them suddenly as though to give himself the pleasure of allowing the new world to burst upon him several times. We know how few of us can resist the delight of the kaleidoscope when we see it on the nursery table, so we can understand, from personal experience, the attraction of playing with the light.

A little later the baby reaches the stage where his play, at first sensory, becomes motor. He plays with his hands and fingers, then, when he has exhausted some of the possibilities here, he transfers his attention to the objects near him. He will begin to grasp at any bright articles which are near enough. Later he will move things from one place to another and arrange them in new relations to each other, enjoying the sense of power which comes to him from being able to do this.

This form of play should not be unnecessarily checked. The child seldom does any harm, and if only we can realise the value to him of his oft-repeated movements, we should not be so much irritated by them.

I recently saw a small boy of eighteen months at an infant clinic very much interested in a tin basin he found on a chair. He played with that basin for fully ten minutes, taking it off the chair, putting it on the floor, putting it back many times. Then he put his doll in the basin and took her out over and over again. Then he put the doll and the basin on the floor and turned the doll out by tipping the basin upside down. How long he would have continued with variations of this kind I do not know—at this juncture he was forbidden to touch the basin again by a nervy mother; what justification she had for this needless interference I cannot say—the child was making no noise and was not required to be doing anything else.

When we check children like this for no adequate reason we do them grave injury. Who knows how many capable students have been lost to the world because in childhood they were not allowed to develop the habit of attention. Children are so often robbed of the capacity for concentration even before they have been allowed to develop the power to concentrate.

The years between four and seven have been said to comprise the dramatic age of childhood. These are the years when, a certain amount of

nervous and muscular control having been acquired by the little plays just described, initiative and make-believe plays come into their own. Both have their value—through imitation the child learns to behave as others behave and learns the meaning of many actions by actually performing them; through make-believe he develops his imagination.

As a rule, as I have said in the previous chapter, children should be left to play by themselves. They need to express their own ideas, not those of adults; they need the society of contemporaries who have the same views of life as themselves. Occasionally, however, a grown-up may play with the child to show that she takes an interest in his plays. *Very* occasionally she may suggest new games to him and supply a little intellectual stimulus. Such games would be particularly useful on rainy days, when children tend to become tired and slack and welcome a few fresh ideas and an organised game.

With a small boy I know, the first things to be taken out on rainy or foggy days are the "shop things"—for this six-year-old keeps a general shop with real articles for sale; reels of cotton, tablets of soap, sheets of pins, packets of needles, cartons of rice, sago and cornflour, sugar, lengths of tape, shoe-laces, hooks and eyes. Many customers come to the shop—cook for an ounce of sugar or a quarter of a pound of rice for the nursery pudding; Annie, the housemaid, for a reel of cotton for repairing her dress, mother

may have occasion to buy a cake of soap for the visitor's room or father a shoe-lace to replace the one that is broken.

Michael's shop is very clean and professional. A remnant of American cloth, which the little boy bought in a sale for a few pennies, covers the top of the counter, and the counter itself is made of some sugar boxes turned upside-down. A few tins of toffees stand on the shelves, and small tins of fruit or custard powder or junket-tablets are specially bought in sometimes if cook has mentioned one day when Michael has been starting off on a walk that she may be requiring such articles. Several customers find their way to the shop on foggy mornings, and sometimes a very busy trade goes on for several minutes, while Michael very carefully weighs out two ounces of rice or four of barley with real weights on real kitchen scales.

But the young shopman does not want too many customers, for there is a great deal of business to do besides that of selling the goods. There are, for instance, crayon advertisements to be drawn, advertising the special lines in the shop. When a special order has been left some time before it is necessary to advertise these goods, stating the brand in stock, so that cook may know she is really getting the brand she ordered. Then, again, there are the accounts to be balanced, for every penny that goes into the till must be accounted for when the shop is shut. Father is auditor of accounts, and if

these are to be accurate much addition and subtraction are necessary.

Again, there is the stocktaking to be done. All the commodities kept in tins Michael must examine from time to time to see that they are air-tight. The tins of toffee must have their seals unbroken, and the wrappers of packets of butterscotch must be fresh and untouched.

Michael also keeps a book entitled "Things a Shopkeeper has to Know," and in this he enters little facts he finds out in his work. He learns, for instance, the number of ounces there are to a pound, or the change a customer must receive if she buys two-pennyworth of soap-flakes and proffers a shilling. As Michael grows older he will add facts, perhaps, as to the country of origin of sultanas or raisins, for sometimes customers do make these enquiries, and they must be answered by a shopman who knows his business.

The shop is only open for a few hours at a time, for Michael has much to do in other lines. Being a real boy, of course he loves engines. But he doesn't merely wind them up and place them on circular lines to puff away until they run down. No, Michael's trains run by time-table. He has two suburban stations and a big railway terminus with several platforms between from which several services run. The platforms are only made of inverted cardboard boxes, but since the surface of the cardboard is gummed and sprinkled with sand to give the appearance of

roughcast, they are more realistic than many bought in the toy bazaar. Tiny dolls stand about on the platform, and there are a few passengers engaged in studying the time-table board, which is written out neatly in a childish hand and pasted up on the cardboard wall of the station where everyone can see it.

There is no time to tell of all Michael does with his trains, but there is fine material here for intelligent play for every imaginative mother and child.

Another very popular object is the sandtray that stands on a low table in a corner of the nursery. With this Michael illustrates scenes from his favourite stories. He has just built a very good scene to illustrate the Sleeping Beauty. The castle is made, to be sure, only of prosaic wooden bricks, but some beautiful golden paper (bought at a bazaar for 2d. a roll) transforms it into a real golden castle. Silver paper, cut into squares, makes the turrets. Before the castle there is the prickly hedge through which the lover-prince must ride, and for this Michael has gathered together all the hard and prickly things he can find—chestnut burrs and thorny branches from the bramble bushes. Beyond this lies the beautiful garden, with its lawns (of green Turkish towelling!), its walks of sand, its little pond, which, if the truth be known, is only a piece of looking-glass with its rough edges hidden by the sandy banks around it. There are big hills of sand planted

with twigs which make good miniature trees, and the cardboard prince is seen riding along on his cardboard horse to the castle.

Another of Michael's favourite possessions is the Word Dictionary. When he was a very little boy, acquiring new words every day, his mother bought him a set of parquet tiles—easy and light for a baby to play with—and a set of letters. As he introduced a fresh word into his vocabulary the letters forming it were pasted on to a tile and added to the collection of words already made. Now that he is six his collection has increased greatly, and on days of bad weather when he is confined to the house he takes the Word Dictionary out of its cupboard and makes up sentences on the floor.

This little boy has formed the habit of relying upon himself for entertainment, a habit which will be productive of much happiness in after life. Every child can and should be trained to this. Leave your children, from earliest babyhood, to play *by themselves* and the ingenuity of their games will astonish and delight you. In their play they begrudge no effort until we make them conscious of it.

The 'Tschwi negroes have a proverb, "No one teaches the smith's son his trade; when he is ready to work, God shows him how." An old negro explained the meaning of the proverb thus (although I think the translator gives the old negro credit for a more extensive vocabulary than he really could possess): "God has im-

planted in children the faculty of observing and imitating, and when the son does what he has seen his father do so often it is as if he knew of himself. It is, indeed, God Who teaches him!" This is primitive logic but good psychology. . . . No 'Tschwi mother would rebuke her child for laziness or uproariousness when he is playing. She knows of what value imitation will be in later life; and if we assimilate this truth, we ourselves in the light of civilisation can develop it farther—we can see the value of imitation not only in the economic fight for life, but we can appreciate also the basis it offers for the development of the less primitive qualities of accuracy and skill.

CHAPTER V

TOYS—THEIR PLACE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHILD

In his novel, "Joan and Peter," Mr. Wells sums up very aptly the small child's attitude towards his toys: "Toys were to Peter the simplified essence of things, pure, perfect and manageable." The author goes on to compare a real train with a toy one from the child's point of view. The real train, he points out, is quite without the bounds of control—it goes to a fixed destination at a fixed number of miles per hour; it is filled with passengers sitting firmly in all the corner seats. The toy train, on the other hand, can be ordered to any station in the world at any pace, according to the owner's fancy.

Toys, in fact, are objects over which the child acquires a certain measure of control. He owns them. He can do with them, within limits, as he likes. We see this delight in ownership, this sense of power over weaker things, very early in the child. I heard Baby Una, aged two, scolding her toy dog violently the other day for some supposed misdemeanour, and all of us know how a child delights in washing a doll's face and combing her hair—activities which he particularly dislikes practised on himself! There is no doubt that toys are valuable from this point of

view alone—that they give the child opportunity to exert authority and control and a sense of ownership that is stimulating to the growth of personality.

A good toy is, therefore, in the first place, simple, manageable, and understandable, giving the child experience in dealing with objects of his environment. This rules out all over-elaborate, over-big toys. A second charactertistic of the good toy is that it gives opportunities for creative work. The desire to do, to construct, is one of the child's strongest characteristics. His invariable question concerning his toy is: "What can I *do* with it?"

That is a question wise parents also will ask themselves. This doll, is she capable of playing the part of a real baby? Is she cuddlesome? It matters not how fine her frock if her body is so stiff that she cannot sit down to a doll's tea-party. This sailing boat—does it really sail? Or is it badly overweighted, its mast placed in an incorrect relation to the centre of gravity so that it overturns in the water? This box of bricks—can the child build houses, churches, garden walls and other edifices with it, or can he only make the building the pattern of which is scheduled on the box?

Toys which give opportunity for creative work are not difficult to find. Take the doll, for instance. The child can do everything for her that he sees being done in his own home. He can dress and undress her, lay a table for her,

make her bed for her, cook for her, pack and unpack her clothes for her.

As the boy gets older, he tends to discard the doll, but the girl can find much to do for her, even until the age of eight or nine. There are dollie's little dresses to be made or knitted, there is some laundry work to be done for her, furniture for the doll's house to be made from wood or cardboard. The doll—the real, old-fashioned doll, not the grotesque caricature found in the modern toyshop—thus helps the child to represent life in miniature. This is the best possible preparation for life in the big world; the child is not only learning *how* to do things, to lay tables, to make clothes and so on, but habits of attention, concentration and industry, which are essential for success in after life, are being formed in the doing.

Children identify themselves very much with their dolls. Few mothers are not asked to kiss the doll good night when the small owner's bedtime arrives. Professor Sully mentions the case of one little girl who painted red spots on the faces of all her dolls when she was recovering from measles! The doll, as the Professor remarks, is "the all-important comrade in that solitude *à deux* of which the child is so fond."

"Occupational toys" also give the child opportunities to make and to do. Plasticine, for instance, is valuable not only because it encourages manual dexterity, but because with it the child is able to manufacture any number

of forms of life—baskets with fruit in them, little men and women, animals, kitchen utensils, flowers and many other objects. The sand tray of the kindergarten is valuable in that it gives the toddler the opportunity to use his hands. He will be happy for a long time in making sand-pies, in emptying his little bucket and filling it again. He does not take pleasure in the result of his work, as the older child does, but he delights in the activity itself.

Beads with twine upon which to string them, miniature blackboards with coloured chalks, tea-sets, properties to help in imaginative play like Red Indian outfits and tram conductor's sets are also popular.

Puzzles are another example of toys which encourage the child to *do* something. Here the work is not so definitely creative, as only one result can be attained, but the puzzle presents a problem of interest to the child.

The same might be said of Dr. Montessori's buttoning and lacing frames, the long stair or the broad stair. A child of three may take out and replace the wooden insets thirty or forty times. The correct placing of the graduated cylinders presents a problem of interest to his mind and he wants to solve it.

When I use the word "toy" in connection with the Montessori apparatus, I do not intend to belittle in any way their educational importance. Throughout this article I use the word "toy," not to designate an object to keep a

child quiet or to provide amusement for an idle hour, but one that is of profound significance in the child's development. Very often the best toys have not seen a toyshop. The doll of one ragged baby I saw in Regent's Park—an old beer bottle wrapped in a blanket—was a far better toy than the doll of many a child driving in a carriage. The doll with an elaborate wardrobe and marvellous toilet accessories attracts a child momentarily on account of its novelty, but in the end too perfect a toy is bound to stultify the child's imagination. He feels there is nothing left for him to add to its uninteresting perfection. This is a pity, for as Robert Louis Stevenson says, "It is the child's whole profession to take a tub for a fortified town and a shaving brush for a deadly stiletto." If we give a child too elaborate toys, he grows to depend upon them for an effect which, by a little ingenuity, he could as well produce for himself. To give a child a highly finished toy is to encourage him to desert the land of make-believe, to allow the artisan who manufactures to kill the artist who creates.

But though toys should not be over-elaborate, they should be well made, for it is through their toys that children form their ideals of workmanship. The toys which mean so much to a child are valuable in forming his taste—it is worth while to select dolls of pleasing appearance, soft animals which are well-proportioned and true to life and wooden toys painted in pleasing

colours. The necessity for a high standard of construction seems obvious—yet the other day I saw a white pussy cat with only two paws and an otherwise pleasing doll in a frock of most hideous pattern.

Children should be allowed to choose their own toys. As Dr. Mary Weston says in her new book, "Healthy Childhood": "Most of us seem to find it so hard to let children alone to exercise their power of choice in things which need no adult control. . . . We need not be incessantly trying to bring the child into line with what we think we did in our childhood, or what we think our children ought to like. Girls are often expected to be "little mothers" before they are out of their own nursery, and presented with innumerable dolls and flat irons and cradles. Boys are frequently given steam engines or meccano at an age when they are merely bored by them, and ridiculed if they nurse a doll or express that love of new clothes which is common to all small children. It is as wrong to snub a little boy for being natural in these respects as it is to comment repeatedly on a little girl's love of so-called "boy's games" when she happens to be at that stage of development, and to fill her with the idea that she is an interesting child, and different from other little girls."

If children *are* left free to choose their toys, we shall often find they choose what we consider the most extraordinary playthings. I saw a baby of eighteen months, not long ago, enjoying herself

thoroughly with a handful of brussels sprouts. She was picking the leaves from the stem of each bud, examining them as she did so with the most fascinated attention. She had undoubtedly picked *the* toy for her stage of development; it gave her something to do; it taught her something of the structure of buds; playing with it favoured the growth of concentration; but what grown-up amongst us would have thought of giving a child such a plaything?

The predilection of the gutter child for mud pies has often been the subject of comment: it illustrates the same tendency, marked in all unspoiled children, to seize the most suitable objects in the environment for playthings. It was observation of this trait that led Comenius to write in 1628: "Inasmuch as children try to imitate what they see others do, they should be permitted to have all things, except such as might cause injury to themselves. . . . Whatever children delight to play with, provided that it be not hurtful, they ought rather to be gratified than restrained from it, for inactivity is more injurious to both mind and body than anything in which they can be occupied."

Some of the real old-fashioned toys should play their part in the child's life. A hobby horse with spotted head and neck, mounted on a scarlet stick, is a splendid steed for a gallop round the garden or nursery. Play with ninepins develops skill and precision of aim. A skipping

rope and whipping top give the child an opportunity to take physical exercise.

Children naturally tend to be destructive, and we ought to distinguish between the destructiveness that deserves punishment and that which is to a certain extent laudable in that it is prompted by curiosity and a desire for knowledge.

Wanton destructiveness is, of course, highly undesirable. The child who deliberately spoils and breaks *anything*, merely for the sake of spoiling it, is learning to hold human labour lightly. He should instantly be checked by having the toy taken away. But we should examine our own part in the matter too. If we give the child too highly finished toys that bore him because there is nothing he can do with them, we, not the child, are to blame for any mischief that ensues.

On the other hand there is a type of destructiveness which arises, not because the child is bored, but because he is so keenly interested in his toy that he wishes to investigate further. Dr. Stanley Hall gives several interesting cases of this. A small girl aged five slashed her doll's body open in order to see what sort of blood was inside. Another child poked her doll's eye into the head, then broke the face to find out what had happened to the eye! Two children, aged seven and eight, broke a thermometer by placing it on the stove to see how high the mercury would rise. A four-year-old boy cut the hair off his sister's doll in order to see whether the hair

would grow again. I think it should be possible to deal sympathetically and yet wisely with small people in such matters. Let us be careful not to discourage the spirit of enquiry that prompts seemingly destructive acts, yet at the same time we may suggest that it is better to unpick a tiny piece of the seam of a doll's body (and sew it up again afterwards!) than to rip her open if we want to see what is inside her. It is important to give the child opportunity to play with the right toys. Thought, consideration, observation and knowledge of child nature are needed to guide the child in his development.

CHAPTER VI

THE CULT OF THE MUSCLES

FAR back in the seventeenth century, Comenius, the first to emphasise the importance of what he called "the school of the mother's lap," was proclaiming the necessity for good physical education. His work foreshadowed the best thought of nearly three centuries later. Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel preserved many of his doctrines in their teaching, and in these later days educationalists devote as much attention to the physical as to the mental development of the children under their care. Not only do they aim at establishing good physical habits in their children; not only do they keep an intelligent eye upon growth and measure, height and weight regularly; they encourage plays and games and exercises to develop strong, straight bones and sturdy muscles; they provide special apparatus to help the child to gain muscular and nervous control.

Nearly everyone realises the importance of correct physical care in early childhood; it is generally known that good habits of digestion, good habits of sleep formed in childhood have a great influence on the whole subsequent life. But the necessity for looking after the develop-

ment of the body, especially the growth of bones and muscles, is not so universally recognised.

When one considers that a baby's bones during the first few months of life are so soft that they can be moulded by massage into almost any shape, it would seem obvious that the most stringent supervision is needed that the child may always sit and lie in a good position. Actual deformity tends to be produced in a tiny baby who is always laid on one side. I have often wondered, too, whether the sleepy toddlers one sees curled up anyhow in their prams do not suffer in after life on this account. This is a most important side of physical education—to ensure by constant watching that tiny children form good habits of sitting and standing and lying in bed or perambulator.

Mothers often keep their babies "off their feet" for a very long time after they can walk because they are afraid that the weight of the body may cause the legs to bow outwards. This does happen in some cases, but, though it is certain that a tiny baby should never be *urged* to walk, there is little fear of the child's legs being twisted if his bones are as strong as they should be at the age of twelve or thirteen months. When bowing does occur in the baby beginning spontaneously to walk, rickets is very often the cause. The only course then is to go to the doctor immediately and to pay strict attention to his orders in the way of sun-baths, change of diet and massage. Even before the child begins

to walk weak joints can often be detected. A baby of eight months I saw a few weeks ago had ankles so loose that the feet could easily be turned until the soles looked outward or inward. Four weeks daily massage have done their work, and now the child's ankles are quite strong and straight.

Precautions of this kind duly taken, toddlers should be allowed to jump and hop and run without too much restriction. Of course this must not interfere with the daily sleep and, in the case of a highly-strung child who is nervously restless, it is a good thing to encourage quiet occupations, but otherwise children should be left as free as possible. Every child loves space and activity—our toddlers at the Children's Clinic usually prefer to run round and round the big room to playing with the toys provided; they seldom get such a chance to stretch their legs at home. It is a good thing to take children to the parks and recreation grounds as often as possible—it is certainly much better for them to run round and round the wide gravel paths or play a ball-game than to dawdle with a perambulator along a dull, monotonous street. The apparent aimlessness of these running about games need not disturb us—very small children do like to run after a big scarlet or orange ball, but sometimes they will not even bother to pick it up. It is the activity they like, not the result of the game. Until the children are four or five they are absorbed enough in the possibilities of

movement without the inducement of an external reward.

On some occasions, however, when children are tired and peevish with being kept indoors on a rainy day, for instance, or when they have been in each other's company for many hours at a stretch, it is useful to direct their activities slightly. A little grown-up organisation brings in a touch of discipline that is not distasteful but delightful to the child. Really formal exercises are unsuitable for three and four-year-olds, but what about these suggestions for a wet afternoon ?

" Pretend you are a ball being bounced as hard as possible." " Pretend you have on the seven league boots." " Pretend you are the ducks. I am the farmer's wife coming to feed you. You come to meet me, quacking loudly." " Pretend you are bunnies." " Pretend you are geese." " Pretend you are kangaroos." All these exercises, suggested by the Board of Education as physical exercises for the infants in the schools, bring in the play interest and appeal to the child's imagination. He enters into the fun with gusto, stretching his little arms and legs with a vigour he could not possibly put into obeying formal commands.

Madame Montessori also suggests some useful exercises. In the Children's Houses one of the children's favourite games is to sit in a ring round a big rubber ball suspended from above. They take turns to punch at it with all their might.

thus developing the muscles of back and arms. In the playground outside there is a little fence with a handrail running across it at the top and a foot-rail at the bottom. The children love to move sideways along this and they will exercise on it for long periods at a time, developing muscles of legs and arms, but without undue fatigue, since the weight of the body is equally distributed.

To help the children to obtain muscular control, Madame Montessori suggests drawing a chalk line on the floor and encouraging the children to walk along it as she says, "like little tight-rope walkers." Children love this exercise, and it can easily be carried out on the cork carpet of the ordinary nursery.

So far we have only discussed the training of the big muscles of hands and feet, arms, legs and back. This must be put first, for premature education of the finer muscles of the fingers and eyes is responsible for a great deal of nervous ill-health later on in life. Three-year-olds and four-year-olds should never be expected to sew, to read, to do small niggardly jobs. But a great deal to educate hands and eyes may be done by giving the child big beads to thread, big letters around which to trace, big designs to fill in with chalks or crayons. The Montessori cylinders are very useful in giving the child practice in making the movements required for taking objects from a table, in putting them down again, in inserting them into holes. So are the Wallin peg-

boards, so are the Goddard form boards. That the child may develop muscular control is by no means the only object of these pieces of apparatus, but though their bearing on mental education is so important, their influence on the physical education of tiny children must not be forgotten.

But in providing all this apparatus and these special exercises and so on, we must not neglect the common things. That, perhaps, is a tendency of the specialised education of to-day. We have said in a previous chapter that little children should be allowed to help in the ordinary every-day work of the house. This is as important from the physical point of view as from any other. In learning to carry a cup of milk without spilling it, in dragging a chair up to the table, in pouring water from a jug into a glass, in buttoning up his coat, the child is learning naturally to do the actions required of him in every-day life. This is a most important part of the child's physical education and should be regarded as indispensable to correct physical and mental development. All the apparatus and the graded exercises and little plays are useful because they furnish a means by which the child may practise one particular action again and again, but the principal aim of parents and educators must be to help the child to lead a natural life in which his desire for activity is gratified and the education of his muscles proceeds with the education of mind and character.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRAINING OF THE SENSES

THE man who said that "the senses are the avenues of the soul" uttered a very profound truth. The baby is not many weeks old before his little fingers begin to explore the environment, and with each new touch impression a message travels from the nerve-endings in the sensitive finger-tips to the grey matter of the wondering brain. These messages are amongst the first, and are the most definite, that the child receives regarding the outside world. It is largely through the sense of touch, therefore, that the light of intelligence begins to shine in Baby's eyes. Mainly through his finger-tips—and through his lips, which are also well supplied with nerve-endings—he first apperceives the difference between me and not-me, he learns much of the inherent qualities of things, and through this knowledge gradually attains mastery over his environment.

Sight supplements touch. Psychologists tell us that at birth the sense of sight is less developed than that of touch, but even though vision is so very rudimentary, the eyes play their part in helping the little one to correlate the impressions

that pour in upon him through the nerves of touch.

Hearing is remarkably acute. Astonishingly soon the child learns to recognise his mother's voice. Through this sense, therefore, he is able also to perfect his social relations.

Since these three principal senses play such an important part in development, any reasonable scheme of education for young children must take them into account.

The best training here, as in other departments of early education, is incidental. Give your baby plenty of opportunities for touching things and give him plenty to look at. Rattles should be of all shapes and sizes and colours, bright cards and pictures hung on the nursery walls should be changed from time to time.

As the child grows older and becomes able to toddle about, it is difficult to avoid limiting him unduly. His fingers attack everything and accidents sometimes happen because the little hands are as yet inexperienced in holding. But any mother worthy of the name will suffer minor inconvenience cheerfully once she has realised that this apparently aimless tinkering is essential to healthy mental development. There are many facts for the small child to learn, facts which we are apt to imagine come naturally to him, but which actually he has a certain difficulty in acquiring, and he can only do so if he is left free to learn in his own way. All valuable articles should be put well out of reach, then the

only rule necessary is that all objects examined are to be replaced.

Even a child of two and a half has no difficulty in understanding this.

The Montessori apparatus is, of course, particularly well suited for the child's experiments, and is valuable in that it is not only a means of training the senses, but also helps the child to acquire facility in the little details of everyday life, and prepares him, through leading him to appreciate form and size and encouraging him to make the movements involved in writing, all unconsciously for later reading and writing.

The *lacing and buttoning frames*, for instance, educate the muscles of the hand. Two strips of material with different types of fastening—buttons, hooks and eyes, and eyelet holes and laces—are attached to a light frame. The exercise is to fasten the two strips together and to unfasten them again.

The *solid insets* consist of a block of wood with graduated holes varying in one case in circumference, in another in depth, in the third in both circumference and depth, and cylinders, furnished with handles, to fit these holes. Only one set is used at first. The child of two and a half or three years is intensely interested in taking the cylinders out, mixing them up and replacing them in their correct places again. This is an immense labour to him ; at first he finds it very difficult to replace them correctly, but he puts forth all his energy and concentration and finally

succeeds. When he has succeeded he will repeat the exercise again and again.

The *tower* is a series of ten graduated cubes, made in wood and coloured pink. The child finds it difficult at the beginning to build the tower correctly, with the largest cube on the floor and the smallest of all on top, but when his eyes become more educated through practice the exercise is easy and delightful to him. I have found children enjoy playing with the pyramid blocks sold in toy shops. These are cheaper than the tower blocks, and though much less strong, being made of cardboard instead of wood, are constructed on somewhat the same principle. Another set of blocks in the Montessori set is the *broad stair*, which consists of ten graduated blocks, rectangular instead of square, and which when put together in the right way forms a stair. The exercise with the *long stair* is the same in principle, but the units are rods of varying lengths instead of blocks.

It is possible to make lacing frames and the long stair at home—and this saves expense. It is also easy to provide the materials for exercising the sense of touch from the home piece-bag. Cut out two small pieces each of as many different materials as possible—crêpe de chine, satin, piqué, velvet, cotton, serge and so on. Then blindfold the child, mix all the pieces together on the table and ask him to sort them in their right pairs by the feel of them alone.

There is no space here to describe the colour-

matching apparatus, the sound cylinders, the geometric insets and the rest, but all these are illustrated and described in "Doctor Montessori's Own Handbook."[1] Mothers will do well to read this book before giving their children the apparatus, for this can only be truly educative if it is used in the right way.

It is essential always to bear two great principles in mind in the use of the apparatus. *Never help the child to do an exercise.* It is only necessary to show a child once how to do an exercise, then he should be left to try for himself. If he is not old enough to achieve this he will lose interest and the apparatus had better be put away for a later day; if he is, he will have the joy of seeing his own efforts crowned with success. Only thus can he learn the delight of independent work. *Never distract the child's attention unnecessarily.* Your child is learning to concentrate. Let him learn.

By working and playing alone the child acquires good habits of initiative, independence, concentration, industry, as he never can do if he is constantly amused or constantly checked. It is irritating, until we understand the significance of the actions, to see a child sliding drawers in and out, opening and shutting cupboard doors, twisting and untwisting door-handles, but it is worth while to put up with trifling inconveniences if our children are to become through these strong and self-reliant and independent.

[1] Heinemann, 5s.

CHAPTER VIII

CHILDREN AND NATURE

FROEBEL lived over a century ago. He taught his children to study Nature. Pestalozzi lived years before him. He took his pupils into the fields to work and led them to observe the beauties around them. And to-day great teachers the world over—Madame Montessori in Italy, Professor Dewey in America, Miss Margaret Macmillan in the slums of Deptford, and others of their ilk—still insist that every young child have the opportunity to tend his own plants and animals and to see the wonders of Nature. Educationalists are divided in many questions, but not in this—no one denies the importance and value of Nature study in early education.

The child's interest in Nature awakens very early. "Look, mummy," cried a little girl of three as she was being dressed one morning. "The trees are all undressed." In her reaction to such a remark as this lies the opportunity of the mother. From now on the child can be led to appreciate the wonders of trees and birds and flowers, to observe the seasons, to take an interest in all living things. From now on the baby will begin to form his own philosophy of life, to discover that everything in the whole world

obeys the big laws of living as he himself must do if he is to make a success of life. "Nature," says Froebel, "is a manifestation, a revelation of God." From studying the every-day animals and plants—the starling, the sparrow, the snail, the snowdrop—the child learns to reverence life, to understand his kinship with the rest of Nature, to shrink from inflicting pain. "Look, daddy, at this *delightful* worm," said the little daughter of Charles Kingsley as she laid it carefully on a garden bed where it would be safe from harm.

Most parents of to-day think seriously about the sex-education of their children, recognising that the view which children take of natural processes is tremendously important. More use might be made of Nature study in this connection. The child of four who has seen the tiny birds shielded by the leaf stalks of the plane tree, who has seen the tiny green seeds tucked away in the protecting seed-box, who has seen the mother bird brooding in her nest—this is the child who can accept naturally and happily when the time comes the relation between the human mother and baby. For him parenthood is not shrouded with unwholesome mystery. Rather he sees the matter in its correct relation to the whole of life, rejoicing in the closeness of the bond that binds him to his parents.

If only all parents of to-day would help their children to find out, as their interests develop, the beautiful and wonderful things of Nature,

we should see in the next generation the beginnings of a new heaven and a new earth. We should see people living with a conception of what life really means, finding joy in the elementary things of life, finding happiness in every-day surroundings instead of searching for it in outside entertainment. We should see people with a healthy and reverent respect for all the wonderful and beautiful processes connected with sex, with motherhood and with fatherhood.

It is worth while to work for this ideal. And it is possible for everyone. Even the parent who has no book knowledge of zoology and botany can help his children by working *with* them and discovering with them. And even if the child who lives among bricks and mortar seems to lack the opportunities of the country child, there are yet the animals in the parks to watch, the dogs and cats and horses in the street to observe, window-boxes to cultivate if there is no garden.

The great principle to remember when we help the child to learn about Nature is that we must follow his interests.

First, the very young child will be interested only in isolated natural objects—glossy chestnuts, big red apples, acorns. These things he will collect and play with by the hour together if he is not spoiled by being given too many elaborate playthings. At this stage he will take a great interest in animals—rabbits and guinea-pigs, cats, kittens, dogs, birds. All parents who can possibly manage it should give their children,

as soon as they can toddle, some pet or other to help to tend and feed. In the very early stages the mother will take the baby with her to feed the hens or rabbits or any other animals. Thus the child begins to realise that he and his family are not the centre of the universe—in the garden the flowers need water to drink just as much as he does; the rabbit needs his dinner just as mother or Peter does. As soon as is possible, the child should go alone to feed his pets, and he should not be reminded of his responsibilities until his mother is quite sure he has forgotten them. It is a valuable stimulus to development for the child to feel that some living thing is depending upon him for the necessities of life.

There comes a day when the child who has previously noticed only isolated objects in the natural world begins to see their connection with others. He may show an interest in the gardener's work or in the plants growing in the garden. This is the moment to suggest planting acorns or chestnuts, or any other big seeds in the child's own garden or in pots on the nursery windowsill. Acorns can also be grown in "acorn glasses," and the child can then watch the whole process of development, the growth of root as well as shoot. Mustard and cress grown onfl annel is very satisfactory because the seeds germinate quickly. From this it is an easy step on to watch the growth of hyacinths and other bulbs, grown outdoors or in as the season renders necessary.

In the spring the twigs of horse chestnuts, sycamore, ash and beech trees may be cut and placed in the nursery. The baby can watch the furry blanket leaves unfurl beneath the tight, brown, sticky scales of the horse chestnut buds. Then he sees the fresh green young leaves appearing—"They are much later than the others," Peter, aged four, explains, "because, you see, the mummy leaves fold round them to keep them warm."

Peter is also extremely interested in his aquarium which stands in his nursery. It cost five shillings to equip, but the knowledge and understanding he has gained could not be bought for as many pounds. The aquarium is merely a large glass cover, similar to those used by confectioners to put over cakes, inverted with the knob fitted into a wooden stand. Peter and his nurse went specially to a pond near by to obtain pond-mud to form a layer at the bottom of the water. This ensures that there will be some natural food, in the shape of eggs and tiny insects, upon which the inmates of the aquarium may feed. On the next excursion, Peter gathered some water weeds. These are planted in the mud and help to aerate the water. A few handfuls of duckweed, floating on the top of the water, makes the aquarium, as Peter says, "quite like the 'riginal pond." The sides of the aquarium are blackened so that the light can come from the top to the water creatures as under natural conditions, and a few pebbles are placed so that

shyer animals can hide if they wish. Then everything is ready for the inmates.

Tadpoles, collected either in the very early stages or as eggs in February, caddis-worms, water mussels, pond snails, water spiders, and minnows all live very happily together. The water is kept fresh by changing the water weeds frequently. These weeds contain the food of the fish, and with a few ants' eggs and a little ground rice given once a day enough food is provided for all.

There are some animals which must not be kept with the others—sticklebacks, water scorpions and beetles ought all to have separate jars to themselves. Sticklebacks in particular are well worth keeping. They may even build their nest and lay their eggs before the children's delighted eyes.

I heard the other day of a small boy who has labelled certain shelves in his nursery, "Caterpillar Zoo and Cocoonery." This represents another big interest. Provide a child with a few cardboard boxes and turn him loose in even a tiny suburban garden, and he will soon have quite a large "caterpillar zoo." Cocoons can be found in many warm nooks in walls and outhouses during the autumn and winter months.

In the course of his work amongst animals and plants the child sees many instances of mother-love and mother-care. He sees these not as isolated examples, but as part of life; and through Nature study he learns much about

motherhood, with very little definite teaching from grown-ups. When the mother has brought her child close to Nature, trained him to use his eyes and hands to discover the secrets of field and garden, all she has to do is to follow the child's developing interests, and to help the child to answer his own questions about the origin of life as they arise in his mind.

Even when he is only two, the child loves dogs and cats and horses, the lambs in the fields gambolling round the more sedate sheep, the goats and kids; he even loves earthworms and frogs and insects, if he has not been prejudiced against them by grown-ups who dislike "creeping crawlies." When he is three, as a rule, he begin to realise that the animals he watches with so much joy stand in the relation of parents and children. It is usually when he is three also that the child first notices the multiplications of the numbers of animals. And when in spring the new kittens and young kids, the lambs, puppies and foals make their appearance, it is almost inevitable that three-years-old begins to wonder *where* they come from. Then it is that he becomes very much interested in maternity and birth. "Where do the kittens come from?" "Where was baby before he came here?" "Where did *I* come from?" These are questions which must be met fairly and answered truthfully and simply. It is only possible to provide an answer which is absolutely truthful and yet simple enough for the child's

understanding if the mother looks at the question *from the child's point of view*, and seeks to answer the *child's* question, not her own grown-up interpretation of the question.

When the child of three asks, "Where do babies—or puppies—or kittens—or lambs—come from?" he means neither more nor less than what he says. He is not asking for information as to physical details of motherhood, nor is he asking for the fact of sex. He simply wants to know where the animals or babies come from, and very often he will be quite satisfied with the answer, "God gives them to their mummies."

When the child is a little older, five or six perhaps, and asks, "*How* do babies come?" he is asking a different question. Now, obviously, he wants to know some physical details, and if he has been taught Nature-study properly he will be in a position to understand the beauty and fitness of these physical details. Every child knows that young birds come from eggs, and that they can only be born if the mother keeps them warm and safe, taking care of them nearly all day and all night. Every child knows that eggs are easily broken. What could be more natural than that God arranged that instead of being laid early and exposed to many dangers, the eggs of the mother rabbit or the mother guinea-pig should be kept warm and safe inside her body and the babies should only enter the great world when it is possible for them to live in comparative safety. Nor, as the child will

see, is it only animal mothers who protect their children. Flower mothers also take care of the tiny green seeds until they grow large enough to be planted and to start life on their own.

When the child realises these things life will seem more wonderful to him than ever before. He will see how much the human mother loves her children, how happy she is to be able to take care of her babies during the months they are preparing to enter the world. As he grows older he begins to notice the fertilisation of flowers and through this begins to understand the part that animal and human fathers play in the production of life. This is one of the greatest functions of Nature-study in the education of the child. He learns early to see the beauty of that side of life which is too often wrapped in mystery and secrecy.

For all but the very tiniest of children it is a good thing to start a Nature diary in connection with the observations made every day. This may consist merely of a large sheet of paper with a square ruled for each day, pinned up on the nursery wall. Everyone in the house—father, mother, nurse, baby—should be free to contribute to this, recording small facts noticed; the appearance of the first aconite, the bursting of the first buds of the horse chestnut, a snowstorm, the finding of a frog in the garden, and so on. The youngest child who cannot write can draw little pictures to illustrate his observations—a little man with an umbrella represents a rainy

day, a bright yellow sun a day of sunshine, and so on. Thus the child in his earliest years begins his career as scientist, observing and recording facts.

All this is a question not so much of time as of a certain attitude. It seems strenuous work at first to carry on an intelligent scheme of Nature work with the young child—there are so many other things that must be done for him—but soon it becomes second nature both to mother and child to notice what is going on around them. The benefit to the child cannot be over-estimated, and the dignity of the mother's work is increased.

CHAPTER IX

HANDWORK

THE impulse to do, to create, is strong in all young children. I know of a little girl of three whose favourite occupation it is to tie up parcels. I have watched a baby, barely two and three-quarters, spend more than half an hour in turning out sand-pies. Often I have marvelled at the persistence of Sheila, aged six, who frequently devotes an hour, sometimes two hours, to the making of matchbox toys.

The child's instinct for activities that will help him to develop is as amazing as it is unerring. We know now that nature-work and plenty of physical exercise are essential for healthy mental and physical growth; but children knew this, albeit unconsciously, long ago. No matter what the difficulties, a child will *always* manage to find contact somehow with animal life—even if it is only represented by a wriggly worm in the rain-washed road. He will always manage, too, to obtain physical exercise, even if grown-up strictures on running about reduce him to wriggling and fidgeting in his chair! Hundreds of instances to demonstrate the child's sure instinct for activities that are profitable to his development might be given, but these two examples suffice to show that children should

be given opportunities to follow up their own interests in a legitimate way. Handwork is no exception. It is excellent for children from many points of view.

In the first place, it is a great means of self-expression. The child hears the story of the Three Bears—encourage him to draw the bears or model the porridge bowls or paint Goldilocks or illustrate one of the scenes of the story with his sand tray and you lead him to express his ideas, to give out in a different form the ideas he has taken in. In some ways handwork for small children is comparable to homework for older boys and girls. In each case the child absorbs something he has been told, be it lessons or story, and continuing the thought by himself he makes the process of assimilation complete. Whether his study confines itself to modelling, or drawing a map, or writing an essay does not matter in principle, though, of course, the method of expression varies with age.

Continuing the thought by himself—herein lies another great advantage of handwork. By putting into practical form some idea or piece of knowledge gained from mother or teacher, the child is able to devote himself, for a longer period than he otherwise could, to one subject. He approaches his subject from more than one angle, but his thought is consecutive. Thus habits of concentration and attention are engendered, and the small student learns that one subject may be approached from many different aspects.

Other desirable traits of character are developed also. Handwork is self-revealing, and if work is ill-done the child cannot help seeing it. If he cuts his cardboard badly his box will be of an unsymmetrical shape ; if he pastes the corners together carelessly the paste will well out, making an unsightly greasy mark. Thus handwork shows the child his untidiness, his carelessness, his thoughtlessness, and he is prompted to remedy these faults without a word being spoken. As he works he develops the qualities of a good workman—care, dexterity, perseverance.

The child passes through many psychological stages in his handwork.

Take the two-year-old. He loves the various activities for their own sake. He filters sand between his fingers, or turns out innumerable sand-pies, or pours water from a jug into a glass, and goes through this performance again and again and again. These may seem to be senseless actions to the grown-up, yet in these little plays the child learns much. He learns to fasten his attention upon one subject for a certain period, he learns to use the muscles of his hands, he learns the elementary properties of things. All this must be preliminary to actually making objects. Mothers would do well to give their babies of two and three the opportunity to touch and handle many articles in the environment—the toddler must experiment with his hands if he is to find out certain necessary facts

about his environment. Sight without touch is of little use in baby's investigations, for his eye is not yet educated to interpret what it sees.

Various elementary types of handwork are possible even at this early stage.

Scribbling and what we may, by courtesy, call "drawing" are very popular with quite tiny children. Babies of eighteen months obtain much pleasure from a piece of paper and a pencil. It is doubtful whether they intend to express any meaning with their scribbles; probably it is enough for them at first to feel the joy of making marks on paper, to learn how to hold the pencil, and to make the movements of writing. Colour also holds a great attraction for little people, and each one should have his own packet of crayons (which he is taught not to suck !)

Modelling is another joy for toddlers. Plasticine is, perhaps, the best material; it is clean, and it can be bought in a range of pleasing colours. Clay is rather messy for the tinies, and "Glitter-wax" and "Play-wax," though clean to work with, are rather more difficult to mould than plasticine.

Then, of course, there are the "Kindergarten Occupations"—building, bead-threading, sand-drawing, stick-laying, and so on. For building the child should be given *large* wooden blocks, if possible the size of the regulation brick, which any builder will supply in fifties, and he should be allowed to build big walls and revel in the joy of knocking them down—it is the making of the

wall he enjoys, not the completed result. For bead-threading pierced acorns, big shells, or chestnut "conquerors" are excellent. They are to be preferred to conventional beads, both because they are natural objects and because they cannot possibly be forced into small noses and ears.

There is enough material here to keep a three-year-old busy during the hours he is indoors, even without his other work. The main thing required in providing employment which is both profitable and attractive to him is a little ingenuity, a little knowledge of child-nature, and a study of the individual child himself, his particular tastes and interests. A few points in technique also require attention. The child must be taught from the first to hold his pencil or crayon as far as possible from the point, to make big, sweeping lines with free arm movements. This is important from the point of view of later achievement. Older children who fail to draw well, making niggardly drawings cramped of line, have nearly always formed bad habits of technique in the nursery.

For the child of four or five a rather more detailed description of the hand-work he can do is required, and the parent needs more knowledge of the technical side of the work than was needed for that of two- or three-year-olds.

Drawing now becomes more purposive. The child likes to draw pictures "out of his head"—pictures of trains and dogs and ladies with very

wide skirts and boot-button eyes. He is interested in prosaic things—a small boy yesterday requested me to draw a door, a path, an engine, a motor, a man, a tramcar, a fish and a bush in rapid succession! It is a good thing to direct the attention of the five-year-old to the beauties of natural objects and to encourage him to draw apples and oranges, flowers and leaves, as well as everyday things like umbrellas. To help him to develop free arm drawing, it is a good plan to pin up a sheet of blackboard paper on the nursery wall. Standing about a foot away, with a piece of chalk in each hand, the child will soon make quite good symmetrical drawings, using each arm equally. Ink bottles and pears, door handles and oranges can all be drawn thus.

Drawing with crayons is a favourite occupation with four-and five-year-olds, as well as with their juniors, and brush work is a new delight. With three tubes of colour the mother can help the child to mix both the secondary and tertiary colours. A small mass of each colour required should be added to the painting saucer and the child encouraged to make good vivid splashes of colour of the right size and shape to represent the object he is painting. He should be left to represent the flower or fruit he is painting as truthfully as he is able. The tints should be clear, rich and deep, and the brush—held as far as possible from the tip—must be full of moist colour, otherwise dry, scratchy paintings will result and bad habits of technique will be

formed. It is a good idea to use different tints and sizes of paper for different studies. This makes greater variety for the child, and his work, if the paper is well chosen, pleases him because it gives a charming result.

Modelling can be done in clay by children who have passed the toddler stage. Five-year-olds should be able to deal with this without getting too messy, and if, when the clay is dry, they paint the articles they make and then add a thin coat of gum arabic and bake them in the oven, the effect will be of pottery.

There are many possibilities for sand-work. The five- or six-year-old is well past the stage when he plays with sand for the delight of sifting it through his fingers, or even, most of the time, for the delight of making pies. Now he is able to make good illustrations of his stories with the sand in his sand-tray. I once saw a delightful study of the seashore done by a small boy of six. The sea was represented by a sheet of paper well crayoned with blue. Sand was heaped in irregular little masses to cover the edge of the paper, and over the whole of the rest of the tray to represent the shore. Bathing-huts were represented by little edifices of wooden bricks. Far away, on the farther side of the board from the sea, little clumps of moss hinted that the beach would soon yield to pasture land. Children I know have also made most successful scenes to illustrate the fairy tales and farmyard tales they have heard. As they grow older and

hear stories of foreign lands they may use the sand-tray to express their first geographical ideas.

Toy-making is another possibility. With a matchbox and some cardboard and burnt-out matches and a long pin, the five-year-old can make a tiny handcart with cardboard wheels, the pin as axle, and the match-sticks as handles. With two matchboxes, standing one inside the other at right angles to it, he can make a cot, which might be fitted with cardboard rockers and tiny silk or lace curtains. Boxes in which gas mantles are sold, when painted scarlet and each furnished with a slit for posting letters and a tiny white notice announcing times of posting, make charming pillar-boxes. A plain sheet of cardboard, suitably bent and cut and painted, may produce a little set of doll's furniture. Other sets may be made with soaked peas and sticks, others again in cane.

Nor must we forget raffia work, which for the child may take the same place as knitting for the grown-up. Buy him some bright-coloured raffia, and a stout raffia needle, string or cane to form the basis of a basket, and teach him a few different stitches. Then he will always have some piece of work to carry on at odd moments. The possibilities here are great. Most delightful patterns can be made with various colours, and baskets of many different shapes and sizes, and for many different purposes, can be turned out. It is impossible to give details here, but excellent little books of instruction can be obtained from

the School of Basketry in Berners Street. Cane baskets can also be made, but work in cane is more suitable for children over six, for this is rather hard for tender little fingers.

In making all these wonderful things the time will fly past for your child. "I have asked a man, who evidently enjoyed his mature years, what was his principal remembrance of childhood," says Alice Meynell. "He has answered without stopping to find something unexpected—as the man of the moment is too apt to stop—'I was bored.' We should not let our children be bored. What is to be avoided is *ennui* and the vacant hours. Our fathers guarded against this austerely, by means of duty and occupation; we—lessons apart—are attempting that guard by means of amusement. But the evil to be feared is not that of making the child too happy; *it is that of using the capital estate of pleasure.* The child over-amused is in peril of losing amusement itself within his own heart." It is time that conscientious and intelligent parents began to consider this problem of leisure hours before school-time begins. It is not enough to amuse children to keep them "good"; it is urgently necessary to help them to form habits of industry and interest in life. Your child *wants* to work; help him to achieve his desire by giving him the opportunity, when he is two, three, four, five years old, to work along the lines of his own interests.

CHAPTER X

THE JOY OF THE STORY

STORIES are not designed merely to keep a child quiet, to fill in an occasional odd hour. Rather they have a pronounced effect on character, they form a background upon which the child's fancies play, they often supply the stimulus for his most ordinary actions.

During the first few years of life, the child is an egotist. He is generally designated a "natural egotist"—I prefer the adjective "primary." There is a world of difference between the two. Given a natural egotist, any effort to lead his interests beyond himself would necessarily fail. Egotism that is merely primary, however, can be surmounted, and the fact that the child loves to help other people, even when he is only two or three years old, that he takes an eager interest in the affairs of other people, that he delights to make and give away little presents, shows that it is easy enough to help him to extend his interests beyond himself. The four-year-old can never be altruistic in the sense that the adult can be—nor is it desirable that he should be so—but if the child's charactertistics are considered and respected it is perfectly possible to lay the foundations for the development of true unselfish-

ness later in life. Stories are one of the important means of doing this, for through hearing them the child enlarges his interests and develops consideration for others. The small boy told the story of the Three Bears or the Three Billy Goats Gruff begins to realise that animals have personalities, and the tales of other little people exactly like himself reveal to him the fact that there are many individuals in the world and that he is not the centre of the universe.

Stories portray life in miniature at a period when the child is too young to investigate the real life far outside the walls of home. In most of the tales suitable for small children, there are certain well-defined types of individual—there is the simpleton, the good and beautiful princess, the wise, kind king, the tyrant. Through this personification of various characteristics, the child learns in a form most suitable for him something of human life and character.

If suitable tales are chosen, the moral effect of stories cannot be over-estimated. Hearing about kind people, cheerful people, happy people, brave people, is a tremendous influence for good. In most of the old-fashioned fairy tales goodness is rewarded in a way the child appreciates and wickedness is punished. Of course we should avoid telling stories where advantage is gained by lies and trickery. Very often the child builds up his ideals of justice and truth from the stories he hears.

Many other functions of the story could be

described—its part in developing imagination, in making up for lack of experience and so on—but enough has been written to show the importance of giving it its right place in the education of young children.

Some modern educationalists will not agree with this estimate of the importance and value of stories. On all sides to-day we hear of the dangers of phantasy, and many people are opposed to the development of imagination in children on the grounds that this predisposes them to build up a world of make-believe and encourages escape from the world of reality. This is true, of course, of undisciplined imagination, but hardly of that which is controlled and restrained. If we weave stories for our children all day long, giving them no opportunities for practical work, they will become dreamy and will seek refuge later on from all that interferes with their phantasy of life, but in such a case it would not be the stories that are to blame but the whole method of education. Every child needs prosaic, regular, daily tasks to keep him in touch with reality, but provided there is good daily discipline, the more developed the imagination the better. Imagination in its right place, the disciplined imagination that is not phantasy, is a quality which helps us over difficult places in life.

Others say that fairy tales are not true to life. Prizes and penalties, it is contended, are not meted out so justly in real life as they are between

the covers of a story book. This objection is superficially true. We know that justice does not always obtain in this imperfect world. But we also know that spiritual happiness is always the reward of those who live rightly and that failure to do so inevitably brings pain in its wake. The golden crowns or bags of silver with which well-doers are rewarded in fairy tales are merely symbols of the true inner happiness and contentment which we can legitimately assure the child he will receive if he does his best.

The story then must be granted its rightful place in early education. And it is worth while studying the technique of story-telling.

Story interests vary at different ages. Very small children—three- or four-year-olds—are interested in stories of everyday life, of small boys and girls like themselves, of dogs and pussy cats. Many stories suitable for very little children are to be found in "The Child's Garden," by Emilie Poulsson, and in Maud Lindsay's "Mother Stories." Sara Cone Bryant's "Stories to Tell the Littlest One" and Mrs. Craddock's "Every-day Stories to Tell to Children" are both useful.

As the child grows older he becomes more imaginative. The five-year-old has now some acquaintanceship with the world and he is ready to venture into the realms of faery. The old stories of Grimm and Andersen still make their appeal to the children of to-day, and though stories from these sources should be carefully

selected—for the collections were not originally intended for children—not even the most modern mother can afford to dispense with them completely. Bain Nisbet's "Russian Fairy Tales" and "Cossack Fairy Tales" and Andrew Lang's fairy books—"The Blue Fairy Book," "The Orange Fairy Book," and all the rest—are veritable mines of fairy lore. Some of the old myths, such as those re-told in Florence Farmer's "Nature Myths," and, of course, those in the classic, "Tanglewood Tales," are also suitable for this imaginative period of childhood. The child who has not heard of Thor and his hammer, Pandora and her box, Mercury and his winged feet, Apollo and his chariot, has certainly missed something in life. Two inexpensive little books, "Gods and Heroes," by Francillion, and "Told from the Eddas," by E. M. Wilmot, will give the mother a connected idea of the legendary lore and mythology of the ancient Greeks and Norsemen.

It is important, having selected a suitable story, to tell it in the right way. It must unfold artistically and naturally; there must be enough description to interest the child and to make the characters live, but not so much as to confuse the mind. A child listening to a fairy story loves to hear of the princess who lies on a silken divan with scarlet pillows and a wondrous curtain embroidered with suns and moons, but to go further into detail is to make a long digression from the central theme, serving to break the thread of the child's thought.

A soft and sympathetic voice *varied* in tone is essential for good story-telling. One of the first things a grown-up audience notices in a sermon or a lecture is the quality of voice. We say the lecturer has good or bad delivery. The child would not state the fact so explicitly, but he feels instinctively, nevertheless, any shortcomings in this direction on the part of the story-teller. In order to please a baby audience, it is necessary to give the same care to diction as does a public speaker. Sentences must be short, pauses frequent, the accent varied, the intonation constantly modified.

Pauses—the consideration of these demands a paragraph to itself. It is desirable from many points of view to have frequent and moderately long pauses in a story of any length. They break up the narrative at suitable moments, thus rendering easy emphasis on certain points and adding much to its value artistically. In a story about a king's son going on a journey, for instance, a suitable pause might be made when he has encountered his first adventure. The next incident that occurred on the journey can be made the subject of the next section. Thus the child is given time to review the events so far narrated, and to draw them together in his mind so that the sequence of events stands out clearly. In making suitable pauses you are enabling him to keep his mind clear and intent upon the track, you are helping him to form habits of concentration. Further, it is an established fact that

attention cannot be sustained at the same dead level for any length of time. It is essentially spasmodic in nature. It is scientifically correct, therefore, to break the flow of talk at fairly frequent intervals.

Recapitulation has its value in the unfolding of a story. Nothing is more annoying even to grown-ups than to get thoroughly tied up in following the course of a narrative. Cinema producers have discovered this, and in a picture which is at all involved make a short summary now and then to recall to the mind what has gone before. A short summary half-way through a story gives the child the chance to synthesise his ideas about the characters of the story and the opportunity to receive into consciousness a fact he has previously missed.

Observance of these points should make the story hour the happiest in the day. For a while the ordinary world passes away and magic rules instead. But it is a mistake, I think, to believe that children really take these stories for gospel truth. Mrs. Meynell once asked her youngest daughter whether she believed in fairies and received the prompt reply, "Of course not—only I like the stories," and this would seem to indicate the normal child's attitude. "Fiction is fiction to children and not fact. They are enough artists for that." Mrs. Meynell amplifying this pronounces words of wisdom. "Children love a fairy story, not because it is true, but

because they think it untrue, and it makes a fraudulent appeal to their excellent good sense. That sense they are delighted to put aside while they 'pretend.' That is their own word and every child knows what he means by it. 'Let's pretend,' not 'Let's believe.' His mother does not put the 'Let's pretend' into the child's mouth; she finds it there."

This has an important bearing on the choice of stories. Many people dwell on the fear of frightening children, but as a rule only an abnormally highly-strung child is terrified by the adventures of the hen who meets the fox or the princess who meets a wolf or the boy who meets a giant. Such terrible happenings are well outside the lives of the children listening to them, and they realise that "fiction *is* fiction." A tale of the-bogey-who-catches-your-legs-as-you-go-upstairs is a very different thing. Here the story does assume an aspect of reality and may well terrorise the child as he goes upstairs to bed every night. It is necessary to use common sense in selecting fiction which has no harmful effect on a child's mind.

By choosing the right stories for our children, we are helping them to form literary taste. Through stories, the child's introduction to literature, he may acquire a love for books which will last him his whole life through.

CHAPTER XI

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

THE child's developing interest in literature should, in the early years, be stimulated and satisfied chiefly by stories, but books also play some part even in the toddler's life. They have a marked influence on his taste and must be carefully chosen. Pictures should be clear and bright and artistic, simply drawn so that the child can easily understand their meaning; type must be thick and black, well-spaced on good white paper; stories must be well told and suitable.

It is necessary to emphasise these points, obvious though they seem, for many writers and artists and publishers appear to think that anything in the way of literature is good enough for children. Every newspaper has its inevitable "Children's Corner," every bookstall its stack of comic newspapers. Dr. Wingfield, author of the recently-published book, "Parent and Pedagogue," speaks truly when he says: "There is a huge and lucrative trade in feeding the child mind with the most debased type of journalese." And equally truly he observes: "It is hopeless to think of training your child's mind if, at the

same time, you are allowing it to be mistrained and vulgarised by perpetual doses of mental poison."

Why must children be given rubbish when there is so much good stuff to read ? There are hundreds of books by writers old and new which are educative in the real sense of the word and which children really enjoy.

The baby starts with his rag books, profusely illustrated, with very little letterpress. "Baby Animals and Their Mothers," in the Dean's Rag Book series, is the most charming I know of amongst the toy books. For slightly older babies, Nelson's untearable books for children are to be recommended. The first book made of real paper I would give a child would be Hugh Lofting's "Tale of Mrs. Tubbs," published by Jonathan Cape last year. Nor must nursery rhymes be forgotten. Both Harrap and Nelson publish good collections of "Mother Goose." Many modern educators condemn nursery rhymes on the grounds that they are silly and misleading, but I cannot think that this is the case. Children evidently see in them something that adults do not, for they are invariably pleased and amused even by the most nonsensical. Apart from the pleasure they give, they do also provide a certain amount of information. Any child who has learned the rhyme of "Simple Simon" knows that you can't warm a snowball in front of a fire without destroying it—nor collect water in a sieve nor buy pies without a penny. Any child

who hears "Mother Hubbard" learns one great truth—if the cupboard is bare, you can have no bones, or anything else, from it.

The child of four or five delights in those quaint tales of Beatrix Potter—"Peter Rabbit," "Mr. Jeremy Fisher," "Two Bad Mice," and the rest. At this age most children love animals and tend to humanise them. Hence the attraction of frogs and bunnies dressed in capes and shoes. A little later on the story of "Dr. Dolittle,"[1] the animal doctor, will be enjoyed. This is a charming fantastic tale, suitable for a child of seven or eight.

"The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle" and "Dr. Dolittle's Post Office" are good sequels.

Fairy tales also form an important part of the child's library. The volumes of Grimm and Andersen—carefully selected if you please!—hold first place. Ernest Rhy's collection of "English Fairy Tales," published at half a crown, by Humphrey Milford, is very delightful. Andrew Lang's famous collections should hold a prominent place in the nursery. "Alice in Wonderland," "Alice Through the Looking Glass," "Peter Pan," "The Water Babies," Ruskin's "King of the Golden River," George Macdonald's "Back of the North Wind," and the immortal tales of "Brer Rabbit" and "Brer Fox" must not be overlooked. "Granny's Wonderful Chair," by Frances Browne,[2] the

[1] "Dr. Dolittle," by Hugh Lofting. Published by Jonathan Cape, 7s. 6d.

[2] Published by Dent in the Everyman Edition, 2s.

blind writer of the last century, is not so well known as it should be.

Amongst more modern fairy tale writers Rose Fyleman holds an important place. Agnes Crozier Herbertson has also given us some charming tales of elves and gnomes.

It seems a pity that more poetry is not read to children. "The Ivory Gate," an anthology for children by Reed Morehouse, published by Dent, is a good one. Frank Jones' "Golden Book of Children's Verse" is a charming collection. Many first-rate poems have been written for children, and are too seldom heard in the nurseries of to-day. What about Southey's "King of the Crocodiles," Cowper's "John Gilpin," Hood's "Fairy Queen," Stevenson's "My Shadow"? Mr. Milne, of our own time, has also become a friend of the nursery folk through his delightful "When We Were Very Young."

For the beginners of Nature-study, "Woffles and Whiskers" (the tale of a dog and a cat), by Wingfield King, published by Nelson's, and "The Tale of a Cat: Kitcat and his Friends," and "The Story of Squirrel Brighteyes," both published by Steads, are useful. "The Adventures of Jack Rabbit," by Richard Kearton, published by Cassell, Nelson's famous "Shown to the Children" series, and "Tales from Woods and Fields," by Gladys Davidson, published by Wells, Gardner, Darton, are all deservedly popular amongst children.

Early in life everyone should learn to regard books not only as a source of pleasure but also of information. The young child learns to do this very easily. Let him look at the pictures in Polkinghorne's "Toymaking"[1] and "Weaving and Other Pleasant Occupations" for suggestions for his handwork, and Patten Beard's "Jolly Book of Playcraft"[2] for suggestions for games.

But *the* book, *par excellence*, for children is the Bible. At the end of the last century Ellen Key, the Swedish educationalist, was recommending that the Bible be given to children just like any other book, so that they might read it at their own pleasure. Then the advice was rather unpractical, for the whole Bible is rather too much for a child and certain parts of it are obviously unsuitable for children's reading. But in these days with Arthur Mee's "Children's Bible," and "The Little Children's Bible," edited by the Rev. T. R. Glover and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, published by the Cambridge University Press, there are no difficulties. These books should be used freely by the parent before the children can read, and then as soon as they can read put direct into their hands. "The secular narrator," says Katherine Dunlap Cather in her book, "Educating by Story-Telling," "as well as the teacher of religion, should use the Bible tales freely, that men and women of the future may have a broader knowledge of literature, history and life."

[1] Harrap, 7s. 6d. [2] Harrap, 5s.

With these few suggestions, which are obviously not exhaustive, for reading for children under eight, this chapter must conclude. I have tried to show that there is plenty of good literary material for little children to be found if we take the trouble to search for it. Every mother who realises the importance of first impressions knows that the search is well worth while.

CHAPTER XII

MUSIC IN THE NURSERY

I'm sorry for all the children who have learned to "play the piano" on the old methods, who have travelled to music along the dull road of scales and exercises. But I envy the happy babies of to-day to whom music really *is* music, bringing joy and added zest to nursery work and play. Music was formerly considered as a "subject" as dull a lesson as reading or writing or "'rithmetic" taught on the old plan. Now it is a factor which enters into the physical exercises, the games, the stories, even into the imaginative play of small girls and boys. These children learn to appreciate music long before they do anything in the way of acquiring technique.

Thus it is that the child learns to make music a part of his life even in the nursery. He uses a musical instrument as a means of expression, without first having to practise innumerable five-finger exercises. John, aged five, was telling the story of the "Three Bears" to his still smaller brother the other day. He managed to imitate the voice of the middle-sized bear and the teeny-weeny bear very effectively, but finding the big deep voice of the great big bear

quite beyond him, he struck a bass note on the piano to give the sound of the gruff voice.

Three-year-old Gwennie is always begging her mother to tell her the story " where the elf runs upstairs," for here the mother always plays a quick light scale to represent the tiny twinkling feet ascending the steps. Douglas at two-and-a-half gives a perfect imitation of " Felix walking still," matching his steps exactly to the lilt of the march. Tony can play at rowing, reaping and many other games to the measure of valse or two-step. It is safe to predict that John and Gwennie and Douglas and Tony will all retain their love for music as they grow up if their training is continued along these lines.

The change in our attitude to the teaching of music is due to a great extent to the work of Jacques Dalcroze, founder of the School of Eurhythmics. Prof. Dalcroze regards music as a subject in which intelligence is required as well as artistic feeling. The child must understand a piece of music before he can play it. We do not require him to paint something he has not seen nor to write what he does not understand. Why, then, should we teach him to play music which has no meaning for him ?

Piano lessons, as such, are not in order till the child is eight or nine years old. But before this there is much informal work for nursery folk.

Almost unconsciously when he is only eighteen months or two years old the child begins to appreciate rhythm. He sways his little body

in time to music just as the grown-up tends to tap his foot to the time of an orchestra. The baby who stamps round the room when he hears a strongly marked piece of music, the child who raises his little arms and brings them down again in syncopated beat—both these are appreciating music through the whole of the nervous system, and are expressing this appreciation by movements of the body. This is the very basis of eurhythmics, and any mother can help her baby to follow the eurhythmic principle, and to develop a real sense of time and measure and beat simply by encouraging him in his natural inclinations with regard to music.

Children in the nursery should have opportunity to run and skip and gallop and march in time to music. They can clap their hands to a strongly-marked beat in the bar or nod their heads, beat time with their hands, mark time with their feet. There is no lack of material for these exercises. Many books of nursery rhymes set to easy music are published,[1] and there are many volumes of children's songs beside. The old folk-song tunes are also suitable. It is not necessary to play the whole accompaniment, but merely to pick out the skeleton of the tune.

A nursery band can be organised where there are three or four children together. The instruments of the toy symphony—cymbals, bells, triangles, drums—are not expensive, and the

[1] It is worth while looking through Curwen's catalogue in this connexion, for these publishers make a special feature of music for young children.

children love to accompany the piano, chiming in with their instruments on certain beats in the bar. At first all will chime in together, afterwards the music can be varied. The drum, for instance, can mark only every second beat, the cymbal every third, the triangle at the second instead of at the first beat of every bar. The child learns more and more of the subtleties of rhythm, beat, measure. Even of greater importance is the fact that this type of disciplined play helps him to acquire self-control, and teaches him the meaning and possibilities of intuition.

Some of the earlier exercises of Dalcroze are very useful for the nursery child. More advanced instruction requires a specialist in the subject, but there is no reason why the mother should not begin with some of the first exercises in the nursery. There is one particularly good one for three-year-olds. Play a march, first explaining to them that at the given signal they are to stop marching while the music continues. This is a very valuable training in inhibition, and an exercise that most children take some time to master. Time after time they will go on marching after the signal has been given because the music carries them along, and they lack the power to put a check on their actions.

But with little children formal exercises, however useful, should not preponderate over spontaneous play. Rowing, games, lullaby games, the acting of nursery rhymes, should all come in. In the rowing game, the children sit on the floor

wielding their imaginary oars in time to music; in the lullaby game each child rocks an imaginary baby to sleep in its arms with little rhythmic motions; "Hush-a-bye Baby," "Hickory-dickory-dock," "Simple Simon," "Ride-a-cock-Horse," are all easily acted nursery rhymes.

Five-year-olds particularly enjoy "Dutch doll movements." These are stiff, jerky marionette-like movements which can be performed to the music of "Duncan Grey," or Gounod's "Funeral March of a Marionette." The Dutch dolls can march in a stiff, straight line, or jump or run in time to the music. "The Wild Horseman," from "Schumann's Album for the Young," suggests, on the other hand, pawing, high-stepping movements, while the "Reaping Song," from the same collection, can be interpreted in cutting the grass or tossing the hay. Children will be delighted with little cardboard scythes, covered with silver paper, with which to cut the imaginary grass.[1]

These few examples show that it is possible to give children music simple enough for their understanding which is yet good music. Every tune the child hears helps either to make or to mar his taste, and it is certainly worth while to take some trouble to select music that is healthy, vigorous and tuneful.

Side by side with the training in the appre-

[1] Mrs. Murray MacBain, whose "Playways in Musical Training" (published by Evans) is very interesting to mothers, gives these suggestions in her book, and I have found them very successful in practice.

ciation of rhythm and measure goes on the training of the ear to appreciate melody and cadence.

This can begin early in life. There may be a talk on sounds in general—the sea, rain, wind, engines, whistles, rattles, the hum of an aeroplane. Or the children may be taken into the garden and, shutting their eyes, count the number of sounds they can hear around them. Or they may close their eyes and play the game of guessing whose voice is speaking.

Madame Montessori's "sound boxes," two sets of six cardboard cylinders which, when shaken, produce sounds varying from loud to almost imperceptible, according to the nature of the objects inside, also provide a valuable means of training the ear. One set of cylinders is red, the other blue. The exercise consists first in arranging the sounds in pairs, doing this with closed eyes and then verifying the work by ascertaining if in all cases a red and a blue cylinder are matched together. After this one sound may be compared with another, the child arranging the six cylinders according to the loudness of sounds produced.

By training the child to differentiate between various sounds and encouraging him to imitate all sorts of everyday noises, we are laying the foundation for the appreciation of pitch and cadence and melody. That is half the value of games in which the child imitates the farmyard animals, the roar of waves, the shriek of the

engine. That is the value of playing tunes on the piano for the child to follow with his voice.

It is essential in teaching small children to sing to remember that the voice of the child under seven is naturally very high. A comfortable range for him is from middle D flat to the E flat an octave above. All the songs we choose should be as far as possible within these limits, and in any case should never go below middle C nor above F.

Babies sing almost as naturally as they breathe, and often one hears the five-year-old humming to himself a meandering, artless little song that begins nowhere in particular, and ends as inconsequently as it began.

Self-consciousness in singing only grows when the attention of the child is directed to the matter, when he is continually asked to sing to grown-ups. There are only a few rules to remember in teaching little children to sing—to choose the songs carefully so that the range is suitable for the child's voice, to encourage the child to sing softly, brightly and quickly (four-year-olds fall too easily into the habit of dragging over their songs), but the most important rule of all to bear in mind is that we must regard singing as the child regards it, as a means of self-expression for him.

Children pick up a vast amount of knowledge in the early years. The mother's work lies not so much in teaching him a series of connected facts as in helping him to approach big aspects

of life from several different angles to build up a certain system of ideas concerning subjects in which he is interested.

This is where stories about music come in. By hearing the stories about music from many lands and many ages, the child builds up a whole system of ideas about music and songs. Most of the beautiful myths and legends which have grown up around the subject are suitable for children. There is the story of "Orpheus and his Lute," of "Apollo and his Lyre," of "Ælous and the Bag of Winds," "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," "David, the Sweet Singer of Israel," "The Story of Saint Cecilia."

The time arrives when the child begins his real music lessons. Everything now depends on his early musical training. If he has learned to regard music as a force which moulds his life he will not slacken in his efforts to acquire technique, he will not be disheartened by the scales and exercises which must sometimes come in, even on the most modern methods of teaching. Children never mind putting forth effort if it is directed towards an end they wish to reach. And what the mother has done in her long and careful preparation for formal music lessons is to help the child develop artistically and intellectually so that it is possible for him to see the end in view in his musical education.

CHAPTER XIII

THE QUESTION OF THE THREE R'S

"I AM four years old, and I can read any English book. I can say all the Latin substantives and adjectives and active verbs, beside 52 lines of Latin poetry. I can cast up any sum in addition and can multiply. . . . I can also say the pence table. I read French a little and I know the clock." This letter from Francis Galton, written to his sister on the day before his fifth birthday in the year 1827, is quoted by Prof. Woodrow in his recent book, "Brightness and Dulness in Children." It is well known, too, that John Stuart Mill learned Latin and Greek at the age of four—while in the infant schools of a hundred years ago "it was very important," said the authorities, "that spelling be taught, for the true spelling of words and distinction of syllables, with the points and stops, which is necessary to true and good reading, serves to make children more mindful of what they read."

But times have changed, and with them our views as to the importance of the three R's. True, one still meets an occasional mamma who boasts that her darling is very "forward," because at three years old he has learned with infinite difficulty to spell one or two words, but

most of us see that such an achievement merely indicates that the darling has been forced to give his attention to books when he might have been learning invaluable lessons about life. A hundred years ago, the average teacher of young children was usually occupied in drilling unhappy infants, sitting passively in rigid desks, into passive acceptance of certain technical facts; to-day we take a saner view—we see that while the young child's mental development must be judiciously fostered if he is to grow into an intelligent adult, he yet needs a different type of education from that which a grown-up at the same stage of knowledge would need.

Our position, with regard to reading, writing and 'rithmetic is this: We want our nursery children to be "up to the average" when they go to school. We do not want the whole of their early education to be supplied by too great an insistence on the purely academic side of education. What can we do?

In the first place the physiology and psychology of the child must be taken into account. In the second, the best methods of teaching "school subjects"—the methods which demand intelligence from the child and not mere parrot memory—must be adopted.

Let us consider first the physical welfare of the child. Reading, in particular, makes demands on his eyesight. Few people realise what an intricate business is the process of learning to see. In babyhood the child trains himself to concen-

trate long enough on one object to take in the characteristic points of its appearance. Gradually he learns not only to see but to interpret what he sees, to note not only the surface appearance of a thing but to calculate how far away it is, how thick it is, what it is made of. This involves a certain degree of brain development, a certain education of the optic centre, and *education of the eye muscles themselves.* This education is proceeding through the years of babyhood and toddlerhood. By the time he is five or six, the eye-muscles of the child have usually acquired the power of focussing the lens fairly accurately on *large* objects, but not until the age of eleven or twelve years, according to most authorities, can the vision be considered normal, as compared with adult vision. It follows, therefore, that while we can do no harm to the child from the physical point of view in letting him play with big letters, as is done in the Montessori schools, he should not be allowed to do much reading, even after he has acquired the art, until he is at least nine or ten years old. The same does not apply to number. Here the eyes do not play so large a part in the process.

One of the most marvellous facts in human development is the way in which physiology and psychology seem to work together. It is not good for the child, from the physical point of view, to learn to read too early, and it is interesting to note from the psychological point of view that until he is seven or so his interests do

not seem to turn in the direction of books. He likes to look at the illustrations, sometimes he asks to have the story read aloud, but although he may ask on occasion about this word or that, the five-year-old does not of his own accord usually express the desire to learn to read. He takes an interest in the words on hoardings and posters as he takes an interest in everything else he sees in the street, and he may learn the look of quite a number of words by the time he is five or six, but this is not reading proper. There is no reason why the child should not be allowed to pick up any amount of incidental knowledge he likes—it does him no more harm to look at that big H that stands for hydrant in the street than at an aeroplane, and the more knowledge he acquires in his everyday contacts the keener and happier his mental attitude is likely to be.

This applies also to arithmetic. We are not stimulating the baby to precocious development when we lead him to enjoy counting his fingers and toes. The child naturally takes an interest in numbers and figures very early in life, and if when he comes to "book learning" proper, he finds that he has acquired a considerable number of book facts pleasurably in his play, he will not tend to think, as is too often the case, that everything connected with books is of necessity dull.

The incidental knowledge gained in play is also of great value in learning to write. Many a baby starts scribbling pretence letters to his friends at

the age of two or thereabouts. He could choose no better way of achieving control of his hand muscles, and through them control over his pencil or pen.

From the psychological point of view, then, it seems desirable to let the child learn as much as possible *incidentally* until he is seven years old. At this age he should be ready to *formulate* his knowledge to some extent—to group the letters and words he has learned in their right relations, to use numbers to work the simple sums which crop up in everyday life. Early work in reading and number is described in the following chapters.

CHAPTER XIV

LEARNING TO READ

EVERY intelligent baby, as we have said, is learning all day long, and there is no reason why he should not learn in his play some of the academic facts which will be of use to him later on when the time comes to tackle "school subjects." Perhaps one cannot go so far as to agree with the mother, enthusiastic convert to the "new methods," who hung her new-born baby's nursery walls with letters and common words in order that he might be accustomed to the look of letters from the start—one cannot go so far as to agree with her, because there are so many objects more beautiful than letters and more intrinsically worthy of the baby's study. At the same time, by the time he is three or four years old, letters and words make, among other toys, quite delightful playthings.

The author of "A Mother's Letters to a Schoolmaster" tells how she gave her boy, Peter, toy words printed on white paper in black india-ink, the paper being pasted on to light parquetry squares. This would seem an admirable way of presenting words—they are immediately attractive to the toddler because they make such a delightful clicking noise when they are spilled

on to the floor and because they are tangible—unlike words on a printed page, one can pick them up and carry them from place to place. First of all, such words as Teddy, elephant, trumpet, might be chosen, and it amuses the toddler mightily to label each toy with the right word. Later on, as the child grows in the power of abstract thought, words to make up short sentences often occurring in common speech might be included. When the child is six or seven and is seized with the passion for collecting characteristic of children to that age, more and more words might be added to the dictionary so that he not only enlarges his vocabulary, but also learns to spell long and difficult words.

Peter, who was fortunate in having a parent full of ideas, was also very fond of another game. He would make a shop, duly labelling it with the word "shop," and then proceed to stock it with bread, milk, cheese and other things, all labelled with their proper names. In the same way a garden might be made, stocked with trees and all the common flowers. Many words are easily learned in this way.

Another game is played with small pasteboard squares, a word being printed on one side, the object it represents drawn on the other. The child likes playing at this by himself. He looks at the word and decides what it is, then turns to the other side of the card to find out from the picture whether he is right. Not only does he add to his knowledge, but he learns also *to work*

by himself. He is his own teacher, independent of outside assistance in his studies.

Small children of five and six are also very fond of a game recommended in Woutrina Bone's "Individual Occupations in the Three R's." A card with a simple sentence printed on it and smaller cards attached, each bearing a single word of the sentence, is given to the child. The puzzle here is to place the right word on the big card in its correct place in the sentence.

It may seem strange to introduce the child straightway to words instead of to individual letters, but psychologically this course seems sound enough. In reading we decipher words, not by building them up from their component letters, but by taking in the look of each word as a whole—the rapid reader, in fact, often takes in at a glance the look of a whole line. The same process takes place, though naturally more slowly, in the child's mind. He is interested in a word as a whole—he always asks questions, I notice, about the *words* on a hoarding or sign-post, not about individual *letters*. Sometimes, later, he begins to analyse it.

Children learning, all unconsciously, to read on this method are generally good at spelling later on. They might not be able to tell you how a word is spelt, but if it is written wrongly or if they themselves write it wrongly, they at once notice the mistake. Just as a shepherd knows if one of his sheep is missing from the general look of the flock, so the child senses a mistake

at once because the general contour of the word is not quite the usual one. At the same time, of course, it is necessary for him to acquire some knowledge of individual letters and their sounds, so that later on, when he comes to new words in a book, he may be able to tackle them intelligently. Even the four-year-old often takes an interest in letters with which he can *do* something. He likes the Montessori sandpaper letters, for instance, because he enjoys tracing round them and filling in the outline afterwards with colour. It is quite entertaining, too, to cut out letters in paper with the nursery scissors. But obviously everything has a name—that is a common fact in the experience of four-years-old —so that each letter has a name too, which he finds quite easy to learn through constant use.

So far the child has learned to recognise words and to recognise letters. A day will dawn when he begins to form letters into words on his own account, or he will arrange the letters he has been given to make a word. Now the two sides of the process unite and reading proper proceeds apace.

All the games I have suggested stimulate true play in the sense that we suggest them to the child and then leave him to make any effort he pleases concerning them. We know that if he has arrived at the correct psychological stage he will play these games eagerly, unaware that he is learning anything. But I must admit that I view with misgiving some of the " play methods " of

learning to read now upon the market. There is one method in which the child is induced to learn to read by telling him stories of vowel children, and elves carrying E's, and fairies carrying F's and goblins carrying G's *ad nauseam*. In the first place, such a method seems unnecessary—the normal child requires no artificial inducement to play reading games if he is at the right stage of mental development to do so. In the second, we are putting an actual barrier in the child's path to knowledge. *Our object in teaching children of any age anything is to get the child into direct contact with the subject-matter.* With so many fairies and elves skipping about he is apt to become hopelessly confused as to which is the important fact.

Such a method is planned, of course, with the laudable intention of "making things easy." It does not, as we have shown, make things easy. At the same time let us remember there is no need to make things more difficult. Let us exercise our common sense in introducing first to children the letters and words they are most apt to encounter, in the small type which they will use far more than the capitals. And why call *h* "aitch," when in every word we know it makes a panting sound? Or *s* "ess," when invariably it makes the sound of a hissing snake? Why not call letters from the first by their sounds? All these common sense points are worth considering in the business of starting the child on the road to reading.

CHAPTER XV

NUMBER WORK AND NUMBER PLAY

I SAW a little boy on the village green the other day counting—or trying to count—the number of aeroplanes passing overhead. "One, three, two, five, four," he murmured, evidently delighting in trying to apply his very rudimentary number knowledge to some practical purpose. His father, who was with him, roared with laughter. "Nine, eleven, eight, twenty—yes, there are twenty aeroplanes," he mocked. The child looked at him for a moment, puzzled. This was not his idea of twenty aeroplanes. (Actually there were five.) Then he said contentedly: "Yes, twenty aeroplanes." Evidently he felt that whatever a grown-up said must be right.

This is rather an extreme instance of lack of intelligence in dealing with a child, but there is no doubt that most grown-ups are inclined to find the tiny child's first attempts to solve the puzzles of number rather amusing. Perhaps it is because we ourselves are unable to conceive of a world in which number has no existence that we find the child's mistakes so entertaining, but whatever our excuse we certainly ought to be careful not thoughtlessly to mix his ideas about number.

This is important, in the first place, because the child's future success in life depends in many ways upon his grasp of mathematical processes. It is impossible to enter any university without passing a preliminary examination, often of a fairly high standard, in mathematics. Because this is a compulsory subject, the child who is "bad at mathematics" is handicapped throughout his school career. In the mundane matters of life, too, elementary mathematical ability is of the greatest importance. So often we meet a man or woman who, although quite intelligent in other ways, is "no good at accounts." Yet unless one can keep accounts in a business-like fashion it is quite impossible to manage money properly. And extravagance and disorderliness in expenditure is one of the most frequent causes of unhappiness in the home.

It is important, therefore, even from the practical point of view, that we should do our best to help the child at home to set his feet firmly on the road to a right understanding of number. Even of greater importance is it from the psychological point of view. Practically every child is able to grasp number processes fairly easily if his developing interest in number is *seized at the right moment* and *treated in the right way.* "Mathematical dunces," as Margaret Drummond says in her book, "The Psychology and Teaching of Number," "are made, not born." If we show the child at the outset that we expect him to be good at number, since nearly everyone can

be if he chooses, if we follow the psychological trend of his development and help him to make use of number knowledge he may acquire in his daily work and play, we shall find that he tends to learn to add and subtract, multiply and divide, weigh and measure, as naturally as he learns to walk—at a certain stage of his development. Such a child will go to school with a good grasp of the elementary principles underlying arithmetic and his life will be much the happier in consequence. I know so many little people whose lives are saddened by the bugbear of the daily arithmetic lesson. They have come to school thoroughly mixed in their ideas, and they start school life firmly convinced of their stupidity. This affects their whole lives. They feel inferior to other children who may not be half so intelligent, but who have merely been more fortunate in their home introduction to the subject, and this mental attitude prevents them from making full use of any good teaching they may receive.

We must remember, too, that number is an academic subject. We want the child to acquire from the outset a receptive attitude towards "lessons." So many children think them dull, nasty things, necessarily difficult, and these are the children whose attitude to work of any kind is jaundiced in after-life. But the child who finds pleasure in doing arithmetic, in learning to read, in writing, takes from the first a happier attitude towards the achievement of knowledge.

In the chapter on "Learning to Read," it was pointed out that the child's interest in the early years does not naturally turn to books. But it does most decidedly turn towards number. The baby, even in the first year of his life, learns to distinguish between one and two, between many and a few. The child of two has enough knowledge to prefer four sweets to three. But because the child takes a natural interest in number, this is no reason to give him formal lessons on the subject. It is not of the slightest use, for example, for the mother, in a laudable desire to develop her child's knowledge of number, to take some oranges and begin to set them side by side, saying, "Here is one orange, now here is another, now I have two oranges, now I have three oranges . . ." and so on. If the child has not yet arrived at the stage of mental development to know what three is, he will merely be bewildered. He has no idea to what quality in the oranges his mother is directing his attention —is it colour, or size, or shape, or similarity, juxtaposition or what?[1] He tries to fathom his mother's meaning—and cannot. Is it so surprising if he begins to consider himself stupid, when he fails to understand what she whom he trusts evidently thinks he should find quite easy? If, on the other hand, the child has already grasped the abstract idea of what three and four and five stand for, then the "lesson,"

[1] Miss Margaret Drummond in her book "Psychology and Teaching of Number," previously mentioned in this chapter, gives this example, but as the book is not at hand I am unable to quote it verbatim.

so-called, is dull and boring because it only recapitulates what he knows at present. Number instead of being a pleasant and interesting part of life becomes merely a tiresome formality.

But although formal lessons are out of place, incidental lessons are always being learned in the early years of life. As the baby begins to talk, he learns number names with other new words. Then he sees these names he has learned applied in everyday life. "Do take *two* pieces of bread-and-butter," his mother may say to a visitor—Baby forms a mental picture of two pieces of bread-and-butter. "Have half this orange with me"—Baby gets his first, very elementary, idea of fractions. Baby's elder brother receives threepence a week for pocket-money—Baby learns what three pennies look like.

After a time Baby learns, through his nursery rhymes and finger-plays, that numbers are customarily arranged in series.

"One, two, three, four,
Mary at the cottage door.
Five, six, seven, eight,
Eating cherries off a plate."

After hearing this rhyme several times, Baby learns to place the numbers up to eight in their right order. The old rhyme about the fish helps him in the same way.

"One, two, three, four, five,
I caught a fish alive.
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,
I let him go again."

The rhyme about the "Ten Little Nigger Boys," that every child loves, is really a simple exercise in subtraction. One after another of the ten fingers representing the little niggers disappears, and each time we are one little nigger the less.

This play with the fingers, which seems to come naturally to every mother playing with her baby, stimulates the child to apply number-names to actual objects. The old game of "This little pig goes to market, This little pig stays at home . . . one little, two little, three little pigs . . ." and so on, starts the baby on counting his fingers and toes. Then comes the stage of counting everything—the buttons on one's gaiters, the steps to the front door, the toys on the table, the patterns on the floor. Children of three or four delight in counting and counting and counting; they rejoice in the discovery that if only one had the patience one could go on counting for ever.

It is very interesting to note that the child tends to take from the first an abstract idea of number. He begins by passing his fingers over his toes, in imitation of his mother, without bothering to make one number correspond with one toe; then almost immediately he learns that one toe, to be counted, must have one number name; but he never falls into the error of thinking that a big toe has a larger number than a smaller toe. He appears to recognise instinctively that ten or two does not express magnitude, but is merely a name for a certain number. Ten

toes, he sees, are more toes than two toes, but that is a very different thing from saying that the tenth toe is bigger than the second. It, therefore, seems a great pity to introduce the idea of magnitude to the child's mind in this connection as is done through many pieces of apparatus. Dr. Montessori's "Long Stair," for instance, though admirable for teaching the child the meaning of long and short, is certainly not suitable for teaching number. The child who learns to count from one to ten with the "Long Stair" inevitably gets the impression that ten is a long rod and one a short one, whereas his conceptions of numbers should be and naturally tends to be entirely abstract, the number-names being applicable to any and every object independent of its nature or its size. Children in the "counting stage" should be given the opportunity to count all sorts of things; if they are given any special apparatus at all they should be given sticks and shells, counters and beads, and encouraged to use them equally. A child who is unintelligently taught often forms the idea that one really means one counter or two really means two sticks and his mental progress is hindered. The growth of abstract thought is hampered by the concrete objects with which his path is strewn.

As the child begins to count with facility, he tends to group the objects he is counting, to make number pictures. This is the moment to help him to begin to visualise numbers. If he

gets into his mind, for instance, a typical arrangement of five and a typical arrangement of four, he is likely to combine them mentally into a typical arrangement of nine, when asked to add the two together, far more quickly than if he resorted to the old method of "counting up on his fingers." Any tendency to count up on the fingers, by the way, should instantly be checked—if the child is allowed to fall into such a habit, he is learning to rely on concrete objects again instead of relying on abstract knowledge.

The best way to help the child to form visual pictures of number is to begin to play card games with him as soon as he shows any interest in them. "Old Maid," "Snap," and "Beggar My Neighbour" are all useful in familiarising the mind with the look of numbers.

From this play will come another development. The child's eyes will constantly light on the figure at the corner of each card. He will learn to recognise the numbers from one to ten, and he will do so naturally in association with the number pictures themselves. He will then quite readily understand that 9 is merely another

—and shorter—way of writing

and 4

merely another way of writing

Once he

grasps this he will want to learn how to make figures. He will begin to copy them accurately,

and he will also enjoy tracing round large sand-paper figures with his pencil, much in the same way as he traces round the Montessori sand-paper letters in learning to write. This work is useful because the child is preparing in play to set down sums in the conventional way; when he comes to the stage of working addition and subtraction sums on paper, he will not be hampered by mechanical difficulties in writing.

We shall find, however, that before arriving at the stage of working sums in the conventional way, the child is interested in acquiring more practical knowledge. He is learning the elements of addition and subtraction in race games and scoring games of all kinds. He is learning the principles of division by sharing with other members of the family, by dividing his shells and sticks into various groups. With the abacus he learns the principles of the decimal system, for he makes one type of bead represent a ten, another type a hundred, and so on. In playing shop he is learning to work money sums, and in considering the relations of pennies to shillings and farthings to pennies he is beginning to understand the principle of fractions. As he grows older, if he is allowed to help to make cakes and puddings, he learns to weigh and measure; in helping to adapt a recipe to serve for two people instead of six people he learns something of the meaning of ratio. In fact there is no end to the mathematical facts that a child, working and

playing with an intelligent mother, can find out in his everyday life at home.

When he is seven or eight he begins to formulate his knowledge. Children of this age are very fond of mechanical work. This is the stage to help them to crystallise out the facts they already know by making up multiplication tables and learning to repeat them by rote, by working out addition and subtraction sums set down in the conventional way, by setting down more sums and working them out, by working out the tables of weights and measures. The child keenly interested in his subject will make his own arithmetic book. All he needs to continue his work then is a book of questions to stimulate him to solve fresh problems.

It is within the power of every mother to send her child to school athirst for knowledge and equipped with many facts. Let her begin her task with her baby confident of her child's ability to learn and her own power to lead him to learn. Let her, above all, remember Miss Drummond's dictum, "Mathematical dunces are made, *not* born," and determine at the outset to help and not to hinder the child in the natural growth of his understanding of number-processes.

CHAPTER XVI

SOME POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD IN THE HOME TRAINING OF CHILDREN

It is obviously impossible in the space of a single chapter to give any detailed account of the Montessori method. There is a philosophy behind the method and philosophy only attained after years of scientific study. But it is possible to enumerate some of the salient principles upon which the Dottoressa bases her work. Some of the apparatus suitable for use at home has been described in a previous chapter. It may be profitable also to correct, in passing, several erroneous notions which have gained popular credence. We must refer parents who wish to make a study of the system to the books, "The Montessori Method" and "Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook."[1]

The big principle for which Dr. Montessori stands is the complete liberty of the child. She believes that if he is placed in an environment which satisfies his physical and mental needs he tends to develop normally and well. She would have the teachers observe and follow the child rather than restrain him—restraint, according to

[1] Published Heinemann, 8s. 6d.

Dr. Montessori, is only legitimate when the child's activities interfere with the welfare of the community.

Many people say, and actually believe, that on the Montessori system the child is allowed " to do as he likes." This is untrue. Dr. Montessori aims at providing such an atmosphere and such occupations for the child that he develops character and will in performing the tasks he loves and has no desire to be " naughty." Any failure in conduct is treated by the Dottoressa as a case of sickness ; the child is separated from the others and treated as an invalid.

Another charactertistic of the Montessori method is the importance assigned to the education of the senses—especially the sense of touch. This has been dealt with more fully earlier in the book. There it was seen that by using the Wooden Cylinders, for instance, the child learns to discriminate between wooden plugs of various sizes, with the Tower to distinguish between cubes of graded size, with the Long Stair between rods of different length. Until Madame Montessori came the necessity for sense-training for normal children was largely overlooked.

The motor education of the hand in preparation for reading and writing is an important part of the Montessori method of education. With the geometric insets the child learns to distinguish between figures of various shapes and sizes. He draws his finger-tips round the inner edge of the frame into which a certain figure fits and thus

his muscles are trained to make the movements of the hand required in writing. Later on he traces round sandpaper letters. He has already learned to make the appropriate movements, now he learns to make the movements necessary to hold the pen.

The buttoning frames are given to the child with the idea of teaching him how to button, lace, hook and tie. If the child is to develop well he must early become independent. He works with this apparatus for practice in the difficulties which arise in dressing, but right from the first he is trained also to wash his own hands and brush his hair and to button his own pinafore—this last, perhaps, with the help of a slightly older child. The children at the Casa dei Bambini, as we have said, do everything for themselves—clean the room, polish the brasses, lay and clear the tables for meals and even cook eggs.

Madame Montessori has made detailed observations of the normal course of development and she is, therefore, able to predict with some certainty the order in which the child usually chooses the apparatus, and, of course, many children imitate what they see others doing. Thus she says, "The wooden cylinders are usually the first piece of apparatus likely to attract the attention of the child between two-and-a-half and three." But since she believes that *spontaneous* attention is the only basis for learning, she allows the child to choose his own apparatus.

The Dottoressa believes also that the ability

to read and write develops as naturally at a certain stage of growth as the ability to walk or to talk. She, therefore, provides the apparatus by which the child can learn to read *when he wishes*. The teacher is to give individual instruction to the child when she observes that he desires it. The "lesson" may consist of no more than telling the child the name of the letter he has selected to trace around and is always brief and couched in as few words as possible.

Each piece of apparatus has its own specific purpose. But behind the whole of the apparatus lies also a *general* purpose. Much of the apparatus is self-corrective—that is, the child can see for himself when the result is attained without being forced to rely on a grown-up verdict. Thus he learns to go on working at his task without constantly depending upon outside help. He learns independence in tackling difficulties and develops will and concentration in working at problems which interest him.

It is often thought that Madame Montessori has merely designed some new toys for children. This is entirely erroneous—the apparatus is but *one* expression of the philosophy underlying the system. Madame Montessori is concerned with helping the child to form character, to develop will, to attain mastery of his environment—the "didactic objects" help him to do this, but many other activities are useful for the same purpose. It is not generally known that in many of the Montessori schools only two hours

of the day is devoted to work with the apparatus, that a great deal is spent in the open air, gardening, doing special physical exercises and playing games. Stress is also laid upon the importance of the care of animals and plants.

It is a pity that the apparatus has become to many the most important part of the system. There are so many principles upon which the work is based that might be applied with profit to the education of children at home.

It behoves all parents, for example, to take a hopeful view of human nature and to direct their energies to providing a suitable environment for the child in the belief that then he will tend to develop normally and well—the work of the educator, it should be remembered, is not to mould the character of the child, but to provide him with opportunities for developing to the fullest extent along the right lines. Whether most parents will subscribe to the theory that children are never naughty is doubtful. Besides it is only common sense to assume that a child inherits some mental traits which must be dealt with as ruthlessly as we deal with the crooked leg that we put into splints. Undoubtedly, though, positive discipline of the kind advocated by Dr. Montessori is very much more desirable as a general rule than the negative type of discipline which is only another name for suppression and repression. Every parent should suspect his educational methods if discord too often prevails in the nursery.

The principle that spontaneous attention is the only basis of learning is certainly worth assimilating by all those who have the charge of little children. Parents should spare no effort to provide their children with interests that, being suitable to their stage of development, will engage their willing attention. We do not suggest that all these interests can be cultivated with Dr. Montessori's apparatus alone—certainly more opportunities for self-expression, more stories and imaginative games are required by little children than is provided for in the Montessori School. It is also obvious that valuable as is the formal apparatus, there are other objects which give opportunity for sense-training —a child can be trained to appreciate roughness and smoothness, heaviness and lightness, roundness and squareness, by means of the most common objects of the environments.

However varied our choice of material to introduce into the nursery, whether it is Frobelian or Montessorian or entirely our own, the dottoressa's principle of letting the child learn instead of forcing him to be taught is certainly of universal application. Let us put into practice the belief that the child *wants* to learn, that his interest is focussed as a rule on those things which have something to teach him, and we shall be surprised to find how much knowledge he gains in a short time. The child who is allowed to examine the possibilities of keys and locks and hinges and handles, if he so desires it, is the child

who acquires facility in the actions required to unfasten cupboards and doors. The child whose questions about words and letters are intelligently answered is the child who approaches Reading with a serious desire to learn to read.

There can be no doubt that the use of the apparatus is justified both from the specific and the general results. It is a fact that in the Casa dei Bambini small children learn to read, write and do number work with facility and this result is obtained with no over-exertion on the part of the child and without the slightest forcing of the process of normal development. It is true, too, that there is an atmosphere of peace and industry about a properly organised Montessori school which is refreshing and beneficial to child and teacher, and might well be made an ideal for the nursery.

Our only warning to the parent would be to study other systems as well. Froebel has much to give us that Dr. Montessori has not, even though from the scientific point of view he is necessarily behind the times. In these days, scientific investigation is lauded to the skies, but in teaching small children love and understanding are also essential.

CHAPTER XVII

CHILDREN AND OBEDIENCE

It must often seem to very small children that grown-ups exist for the sole purpose of checking and preventing them in carrying out their most cherished projects. They cannot understand the reason for restraint. "Nurse says she loves me," argued Roger, aged four, "but she always stops me doing what I like." Nor does the trite explanation that we are acting only for his good appeal to the small child. Professor Sully tells an amusing story in illustration of this. "I shouldn't be a good mother if I never punished you for being naughty, darling," said a mother to her son of three-and-a-half, after keeping him in bed till ten o'clock in the morning for bad behaviour. "If I had any little children," observed the small boy, "I'd be a worse mother than you. I'd be quite a bad mother. I'd let the children get up when I had finished my breakfast, at any rate."

The problem of helping children towards obedience of the right kind is not an easy one. We have to deal with a little person fundamentally opposed to restraint. It is often said that the new educationalists advocate complete freedom, they are said to allow children to "do as

they like." But new ideas in education, as in other sciences, are liable to misinterpretation. The aim of the enlightened educator is to foster in the child a respect for law and order while giving him freedom within the law to develop his own individuality to the fullest extent. The enlightened educator does not seek to suppress the child, to force him to yield through fear, to make him subservient to the will of others merely because they are older and stronger than he—but all save the crankiest realise the need for a certain wise discipline. And discipline implies willing recognition of law.

How can this be attained ?

Obviously it is of the greatest importance to begin at the beginning. The baby must be trained to good habits from birth. Even the month-old child shows an amazing persistence in trying to get his own way. He will cry for a half-hour on end if he imagines he is hungry or if he wants to be nursed. But surprisingly soon he learns, if he is treated consistently, that crying has no effect, that he is fed regularly whatever his temper, and nursed for a certain time each day and no longer. Thus the well-trained baby learns from the first to conform to law ; he is not allowed to receive the impression that he can always have what he wants when he wants it. Regularity is of equal importance in the toddler's life. Walks, meals, bath-times, must follow each other in correct and regular sequence. In spite of the child's dislike of interference with

his plans, it seldom occurs to him to question any point of routine. Children are very conservative in their respect for any well-established usage.

If the child's life is planned wisely, it is not necessary to give many direct commands. Some people seem quite unable to leave a child alone. They are always telling him to do this or not to do that. I heard a nurse, the other day, telling her small charge to hurry up in putting on his coat; yet it was quite obvious that the child was already hurrying as much as he possibly could. Hardly ten minutes afterwards, I saw a mother with her two children of four and six ordering the elder one to lend his engine to his four-year-old brother; yet, knowing the elder child's charming nature, I am certain that a request, or even an indirect hint that Baby would like to play with the engine for a little time, would have been quite sufficient. Some children get so much accustomed to orders that they merely ignore them. The more rarely an order is given in the nursery the more readily it will be obeyed.

Order is not quite the right word, perhaps—it sounds too harsh and dictatorial. Any child of spirit resents being commanded to do something; he feels he is as much entitled to politeness as a grown-up.

It is, I think, a little absurd to insist that the child should *always* be given a reason for complying with a request. So often the little person

persists with his "Why?" merely to gain time. Where the child is capable of understanding the reason for a request, it is often well to give it to him, if he asks, but any child of five who has been wisely trained should trust his mother or nurse so much that he is willing to accept the few direct orders they do give him without arguing about it.

If we are always consistent the child will seldom argue. He forms the *habit* of obedience. This is a truism—but the point needs emphasis, for children are not slow to take advantage of any lapse on the part of their elders. A small boy sat down to his dinner with grubby hands. "Why did you come to table without washing your hands?" asked his mother. "You know I always send you back to do it." "You didn't yesterday," said the child—and he said it reproachfully, as though he thought his mother's slackness of yesterday should have established a precedent! Sometimes we are tempted to let discipline slip a little, so charming are some of the child's subterfuges. Betty, aged three-and-a-half, was asked to go upstairs. "I can't go up with this grass in my hand, now can I?" asked Betty, who was enjoying herself in the garden. But it was pure folly on the part of Betty's mother to let the child play a little longer, "because she was so sweet." It would have been far more sensible to take the child's remark as a joke in which the small person herself was quite capable of joining. An order once given—and it should

only be given after due consideration as to whether it is really necessary—must always be carried out.

It is, after all, through our being consistent that the child learns that there is such a thing as law. He is obviously not able, in the early years of his life, to appreciate moral law in the abstract. Authority is vested in those he loves, and if they are always firm without being fussy, always consistent yet always tactful, sure of themselves without being domineering, he soon learns that he has to do certain things, not merely because older people say so, but because they are right. The weak, indulgent mother or nurse wheedles the little one into doing certain necessary things "to please her." That formula should never be used. It keeps the child back in that he merely strives to please. Rather let us help him to develop, encouraging him as soon as he is able to govern his conduct according to certain fixed principles which he has learned to respect through the help of the grown-up people about him.

CHAPTER XVIII

WISE PUNISHMENT

I MET a bad parent the other day—a mother who was still under the impression that wholesome discipline is merely a matter of breaking the child's will. "You wait till you get home" she was threatening the small determined person who walked by her side. "You'll see where self-will takes you! You'll go right to bed, my lady!" I don't know what the child had done—probably she had been very exasperating—it is of no use denying the fact that children *can* be exasperating at times!—but I am sure that the mother had failed in one of her most elementary duties to her child. She had never examined her own motives and her own character; she was bent merely on subduing the child.

In considering this question of "Wise Punishment," it would seem absolutely essential to determine what our relations with our child is to be. We must free ourselves from the notion that we have any sovereign rights over children merely because we are older. Grown-ups have stronger characters than children as a rule, because their characters have had more time to form, and it is therefore, natural and desirable that the older should help the younger in matters

of conduct; but just because we are the stronger we must be careful to free ourselves from any trace of tyranny. We must be careful, for instance, never to force a child into a certain course of action merely for the pleasure of making him do something we want him to do. We must never punish a child merely because we personally find his conduct inconvenient. Children should certainly be trained to show a reasonable amount of consideration for others even at a very early age, but we should not expect them to behave as adults—it is in the child's very nature to be restless, for example, and it is not fair to punish him for habitual restlessness merely because we prefer him to be quiet. Even in these enlightened days, the crude desire for mastery often colours our theories of discipline. We must fight this desire with all our strength.

It is the parent's job to help the child to strengthen his will and to direct it aright, not to break it. Once we have understood this fundamental point, we shall probably find many fewer occasions for punishment, for the child will not feel impelled to oppose our wishes, and "contrariness," a frequent cause of naughtiness, will disappear.

Then, too, it is wise to differentiate in children's conduct between faults which will disappear under the influence of time and good example and those that will not. The art of education lies to a great extent in letting well alone. It is as stupid to devote much attention to correcting

faults that will disappear with time as it is to spend hours in trying to teach a baby at the crawling stage to walk. Wise parents will not label their young child's tendency to exaggerate as lying, nor his tendency to get grubby as cussedness—both these faults will disappear as the child grows older, if he is wisely trained.

At the same time, although the occasions on which punishment is needed should be few, it is quite absurd to say, as some people say, that children are *never* naughty. Children, like adults, sometimes fall below their own standard of conduct, and although with good training and by wise treatment we can do much to prevent lapses occurring, when lapses do occur they should be suitably and effectually punished. The child can never make a success of life until he learns that definite conscious wrong-doing has painful results. The aim of punishment is to draw the child's attention to the fact that he has done wrong and to encourage him to do better.

The most ideal form of punishment is that which the philosopher, Herbert Spencer, advocated—"punishment by natural consequences." Take an oft-cited case—the toddler who, fascinated by the bright fire, will persist in spite of all warnings in putting his fingers too near it. This child must burn himself before he understands and takes heed of warnings. In the same way, the best punishment for the child who is constantly late for meals without reason is to let him miss any dishes that may have been

cleared away by the time he arrives. The child who tears his clothes, and who is old enough to be careful, should be expected to mend them. The child who is rude to his mother or a dearly-loved grown-up friend must see the natural consequence of his rudeness in their temporary coldness to him. Such punishments are effective because the child cannot help realising that he has brought upon himself any unhappiness he may suffer. Wrong-doing becomes associated with unpleasantness in his mind, and he bears no one any animosity for inflicting punishment.

But there are cases where it is impossible to leave the punishment to follow the crime of its own accord. One small boy of four, for instance, stamped on a naked fledgling which had fallen from its nest in the garden. His mother explained that this was a cruel thing to do, but the child persisted in stamping the baby bird underfoot. Then "If you do that again," the mother said, "I shall have to take your bunny away from you. You are not fit to look after animals." This seems to me a wise punishment. The child must learn that cruelty is wrong and that his mother refuses to countenance it in him. The mother in this case showed her disapproval by depriving him of a dearly-loved animal. She was not angry with him personally, she was not planning vindictively to pay him out, she was merely acting as the force in the environment restraining him from indulging in his cruelty.

If punishment is really wisely thought out and

administered with pure motives, children do not tend to feel any animosity toward the person who inflicts it. Indeed, there is evidence to show that they feel it is the duty of grown-ups to correct their faults. Professor Sully in his "Studies of Childhood" tells a story of a three-year-old girl who uprooted a plant in the garden and had her hands smacked. One day, unobserved, she uprooted another. Immediately she began to cry. Running into the house, she called her mother. "Mother, 'pack Baby's hands" she said. "'Pack Baby's hands." Only when this was done was she comforted. Marjory Fleming, the precocious little six-year-old favourite of Sir Walter Scott, shows much the same feeling in one of her letters. Writing of her governess, she comments: "I confess I have been more like a little young divil than a creature . . . I stamped my foot and threw my new hat on the floor and was dreadfully passionate . . . but she never whipped me. The Devil got the better of me, but she never, never whips me, so that I think I would be better of it and the next time that I behave ill I think that she should do it for she never, never does it." All who have had experience with children know that often they are naughty out of sheer curiosity; they want to find out, as the saying is, "how far they can go." It seems to me that if we fail to punish a child when he knows he deserves it, that he may hold us slightly in contempt, as Marjory perhaps held her governess. We, being older,

should be stronger characters and it is our duty to check in children behaviour that they themselves condemn.

The question is, what form is punishment to take ? Our intelligence shows us that we cannot hope to find any form of punishment that will fit every case, any more than we can expect to find a universal panacea for all the ills of man. On general grounds one would avoid corporal punishment as far as possible. It is a dangerous practice from the psychological point of view—dangerous both for parent and child : in the parent it may set free feelings of vindictiveness, in the child it may sow feelings of hatred toward his mother and father ; it has a bad effect on his personal modesty, and in rare cases it may become actually pleasurable because it satisfies a desire for violent sensations. Corporal punishment, then, is a very last resort. It *may* be necessary to slap a child of under eighteen months when he does what is wrong ; he is so young that it is impossible to reason with him. We must remember also that there are just a few children upon whom nothing else has any effect. But in the vast majority of cases, intelligent parents will be able to find a far more suitable means of checking undesirable behaviour.

Their treatment will vary with the individual child. Take the child who loves to be noticed, and always desires to attract attention. Quite the hardest punishment for him is to be ignored. Take the child who has the tiresome habit of

crying without any adequate reason. He must be isolated until he overcomes the habit; this is the only way of showing him that no single individual has the right to cause discomfort to others.

Methods of treatment are very varied, but there are several points which should always be borne in mind in administering punishment, whatever form it takes. In the first place—wise punishment is designed to make the culprit feel better, not worse. This means that the child must realise the justice of the punishment, and that our conduct must be free from any trace of vindictiveness. In the second place, punishment must always be in proportion to the crime—never punish a child merely for the amount of mischief he has done; take into consideration his *motive* in doing it. Thirdly, let us be ever watchful that we ourselves are calm and in our right minds when we inflict punishment; let us fight always against the crude desire for mastery which sometimes appears even in the most civilised amongst us.

CHAPTER XIX

LOGIC AND THE CHILD

THE power to compare, to judge, to reason, to think, seems to be a distinguishing characteristic of man. The behaviour of animals like Rin-Tin-Tin and Peter the Great, wonder-dogs of the films, of John Gorilla and of the clever chimpanzee at the Zoo who can ride a tricycle, smoke a cigarette and sit at table as well as any three-year-old, certainly causes one to reflect at times whether men are, after all, such *very* remarkable creatures, but it is certain that imitation and manual dexterity play a larger part in animal feats than any process of rational thought. Some dogs and other of the higher animals do show a certain knowledge of cause and effect—they know when they deserve punishment, for instance—but their mental processes are so simple that the human baby, born with few innate powers and absolutely no knowledge of the world, soon manages to catch them up.

In babyhood, the child observing what goes on around him, noting the similarities and differences between the objects of his environment, is making preparation for the reasoning of later life. He begins to see the causal connection between things—if something drops it makes

a noise, if you hit something hard it hurts you, and so on. Knowledge of this elementary type is the basis of the work that will make the future man rational and circumspect in his conduct. The best service we can render the child in infancy, therefore, is to *give him the opportunity to acquire this knowledge.* We must allow him to experiment as far as possible on his own lines, to permit him to find out the qualities of things first-hand, even if occasionally he receives a nasty knock for his pains. So often we try to "amuse" babies, distracting their attention from some object on which they are focussing to some object which *we* want them to look at—then we tend to ruin their powers of concentration and attention even before they are formed. Thus it is that many a baby is unthinkingly deprived of the raw material for later rational thinking.

The child's native curiosity is so strong, however, that he usually arrives at the "questioning stage" that dawns at the age of three or four, still brimful of the desire to know the why and the wherefore of things. In a child who has never been given a chance to concentrate his attention in babyhood this will not confine itself for long to one object, and he often does not attend long enough to listen to the answers to questions; but every small child is sure to ask them. Why does the wind blow? Why are tables hard? What is hair for? Sometimes he tries to work things out for himself—without

seeking the aid of a grown-up. A small child of three-and-a-half was sitting opposite me in the train the other day on the way to Waterloo. She chanced to look out of the window as we crossed Richmond Bridge. "Water," she exclaimed in great excitement. "We're at Waterloo." Reasoning of the same type is shown by the little boy who told his mother in all seriousness that butter was made from butterflies. The most obvious link of connection between two objects is seized and the objects made to stand in the relation between cause and effect.

Such remarks, showing us that our child is beginning to think and to reason, should fill us with wonder and happiness. There is nothing wrong with the child's logic, he merely makes mistakes from lack of knowledge. Take the case of the small boy who, when refused some oatmeal jelly, which was given to his mother because she was "nursing baby," said indignantly, "I *need* that jelly. *I'se* nursing Teddy Bear." Of course such a remark is distinctly humorous, but we are better employed in helping the child to understand where his mistake lies than in laughing at him. Not only do we confuse the issues for the child by laughing at him, but if he realises his conduct causes amusement he may act up to his new rôle of buffoon and lose that earnest desire of knowledge which is so charmingly characteristic of small children.

Another way in which we can help our children to develop and retain a logical attitude to life is

by answering their questions intelligently and sincerely. We may get tired of the incessant "why," but it is surprising how much knowledge we ourselves acquire in trying to find answers to their queries. Do *you* know, for instance, why when we put our hand in water we don't make a hole in it, how birds fly, why grass is green? The answers to these questions can be found in reference works, and the more we know the more interesting life becomes. When we *don't* know and cannot find out the answer to a question, we should be brave enough to tell the child so. It is just as well for him to realise that there *are* facts the explanation of which lies beyond the ken of man.

A word of caution is needed. Take your children seriously, but not *too* seriously. If they can find out answers for themselves, make them do so. Too often a child acquires a reputation for cleverness because he is always asking questions. I met such a little boy the other day. He didn't stop asking questions for ten minutes on end, and he never waited to hear a single answer; when his stock of questions was exhausted he repeated the old ones—the poor child did not want to know anything, really, but he felt his reputation depended on keeping up a steady stream of enquiries as to the why and wherefore of things.

Parents require great wisdom to deal with children's questions in such a way that a correct *mental* attitude may be developed. But even

more wisdom, and certainly more character, is required in helping them to develop *moral* logic. *The only way to help a child to apply logic to matters of conduct is to show him that there are certain principles on which life is based, and which all grown-ups as well as children, must obey.* Too often we confuse the child by giving him precept but no example. "Daddy told me I ought never to interrupt," said a little girl of four. "One day he interrupted me. So I just *looked* at him —and he sent me away from the table!" This seems to me to illustrate a very common fault in dealing with children. We teach by word of mouth one code of conduct, and the child sees quite a different code in actual practice in the home. The child's logical mind is quick to observe the discrepancy. He will not learn to be truthful, however much we talk to him about it, if his mother is inconsistent in what she says. He will not learn punctuality, however admirable our discourses on this virtue, if the grown-up members of the family are always late for meals. Naturally in details the behaviour of grown-ups must sometimes differ from that of children—it would be ridiculous, for instance, for parents to deny themselves such wholesome fruit as strawberries on the grounds that these are not suitable food for a child of five—but although details differ, principles do not. The child's logic is quite clear and strong enough to see whether the parents' trend of life and thought is the sort of trend they tell him he should follow.

It is difficult to speak and act always in such a way that our children learn to live logically and circumspectly—but any efforts in this direction are well worth while. The power to act and think logically is a distinguishing characteristic of man, and it is so well developed in the child we should do all in our power to help him to retain it.

CHAPTER XX

IMAGINATION IN CHILDREN

It has become the fashion of late to decry the importance of imagination in education. We are so terribly afraid that children may lose themselves in a world of phantasy, that they may develop into mere dreamers instead of into men and women of action, that many of the most modern educators advocate a severely practical training. "Bring the child into touch with reality," they cry. "Teach him to do instead of to dream." "Fairy stories? *No!* There is no surer means of encouraging phantasy."

All of which has a certain measure of truth—but only a measure. Of course there are futile and vicious forms of imagination. Take William James' classic case, the Russian lady weeping over the sorrows of the hero of the play, whilst her coachman froze to death on his seat outside the theatre. No one would wish to bring up a child so dreamy that he luxuriates in imaginary sorrows, and is yet totally unaware of the tragedies of the work-a-day world around him.

But imagination of the virile type, backed up by reason and discipline, rightly directed emotion and intellect, is needed everywhere. Imagination is not the perquisite only of poets and

artists, it is characteristic of the successful worker in *every* field. It is, as Sir Benjamin Brodie said, "the source of poetic genius," but also "the instrument of discovery in Science without which Newton would never have invented flexions nor Davey decomposed the earths and alkalis, nor would Columbus have found another continent."

It behoves us, therefore, to see that the right kind of imagination is well developed in our children. Some, of course, are naturally more imaginative than others, but all can be helped to develop imagination to some degree. And in all the development follows certain well-defined paths.

First of all, imagination must have material to work with. The child in the earliest two years of his life is eagerly busy collecting data. He examines every new object he can find, and by touching and handling it, viewing it from several aspects, playing with it, experimenting with it, he forms a clear-cut mental image of it. This is a most important stage in the development of the imagination, and the child must have opportunity to pass through this phase at his leisure. By all means let us remove valuable objects from his neighbourhood, but let us give him a multitude of cheap objects of various materials to play with. Let us give him time to observe natural objects on his walks, leisure to "dawdle." Miss Margaret Macmillan in her marvellous work with the slum children of Deptford found that nearly all the little ones were poor in observation. They

could not tell her the shape of a cow's foot, few had ever noticed it was cloven, although they had seen cows going to the slaughter-house every day. One child of eight years old thought a sparrow had six legs and several said four. Thus these poor little ones are deprived from the first of their birthright of imagination. We have to remember, however, that it is not only the children of the slums who are handicapped in this way. The poor little rich child whose nurse forces her to give her attention always to keeping her frocks dainty and her fingers clean suffers also.

But in children with normal opportunities for individual experimentation and investigation, the first stage of imagination quickly merges into the second. At eighteen or twenty months, the child has acquired a certain amount of concrete experience, he is intellectually capable of a certain amount of memory—thus he is able to form mental pictures of objects. Let the two-year-old scribble—his drawings bear, as a rule, no resemblance to anything in heaven or earth, but he is *trying* to put down his impressions of objects, and all of us need practice in a new art. Let him act—encourage him to be a bow-wow or a puff-puff, even if the noise *is* trying, for by entering into the life of the objects around him he makes his mental pictures clearer.

Gradually isolated pictures form themselves into a connected whole. The baby who was able to impersonate the puffer-train grows into the

toddler who can not only be a puffer-train, but can dramatise the whole business of going to the seaside. Thus we reach the stage of connected make-believe. Well-meaning elders often try to encourage these games, which they unconsciously recognise to be useful, by giving all sorts of elaborate properties. An *occasional* gift—a postman's hat to play postman in, or a tram-conductor's set for taking tickets when the nursery party elect to play at going for a tram-ride, is no doubt very useful, but too elaborate an equipment stultifies and hardens rather than stimulates the growth of imagination. As Sir James Barrie has said somewhere, there is no ship quite so pleasing to sail on the Round Pond as the stick-ship which can be transformed at will into *any* kind of cruise. A plain piece of wood with a stick for a mast can be a steamer or a schooner, a yacht or a fishing boat, just as the fancy dictates.

As the child grows older—when he is five or six, that is to say, his play becomes more fanciful still. The purely reproductive games give place to others which are definitely *creative*. Instead of playing at going on a railway journey, the child begins to play at fairies and giants and pixies. As a contemporary writer expresses it, the "creative faculty takes impressions that have been stored in the mind, and develops or re-groups them into 'something new and strange.'" This is the stage when first we see the poetic side of imagination—dewdrops on the grass are

described as fairy tears, the stars are likened to little twinkling eyes. And here the child becomes akin to the man of genius—scientist, artist, sculptor, or any other creator. Everyday life is seen not only in the light of what it is, but also of what it might be.

It will easily be seen that imagination is a most important factor in intellectual growth. It is through his imagination that the child is able to appreciate literature and art. Even prosaic subjects like Number require a certain amount of imagination. The simplest mental calculations necessitate the formation of a mental image of the numbers involved.

But imagination is even more important in its bearings on the growth of moral character. The small boy who plays at soldiers becomes fired with the ideals of bravery enshrined in the soldierly character. The child who loves fairies works hard at her dancing in order that she may be able to dance like a fairy. The child who thinks of beautiful stories wants to learn to write —and hence learns easily—in order that she may be able to put these stories on paper herself. And in these cases the important point is not the achievement of dancing or writing, but the development of will that comes when a child sets himself to work for a given end.

Imagination, to be of the right kind, must find its outlet in action. It must not be unrestrained and undisciplined. As Miss Macmillan says, the highest form of imagination is that in which

" the thinker calls up in his mind images with intention and design to make something of them. Inspiration is conditioned by activity, by constructive work of a hidden but real kind. Lethargy produces nothing." While giving our children every possible aid in developing their imagination, we must also help the growth of will and reason to lend ballast to the creative power. " Training the child's will," that he may support inspiration with action, that he may follow out his ideals in practice, will be the subject of my next chapter.

CHAPTER XXI

TRAINING THE CHILD'S WILL

It is a pity that the word "persistence" associated with children has come to bear such unpleasant meaning. The mere thought of a persistent child calls up a picture of a nagging, teasing little creature, whereas, rightly regarded and properly utilised, the persistence which is a marked characteristic of the normal child is one of his most admirable qualities, an essential constituent of the well-developed will.

Of course, most of us dislike persistence in a child because his desires are apt to come into conflict with our own. It is a strong man indeed who can refrain from dominating a weaker one. Many children are habitually over-dominated; their every action is planned for them, their every remark is voiced for them. And this is not because they are essentially of weaker calibre than their mentors, but because they are at a disadvantage both from the physical point of view and from that of experience. "John always has a pain in his back," explained John's mother to the doctor. "No, not always, mummy," explained John eagerly. "Just when I stoop." "So you think you know better than your mother, do you?" said the outraged mamma.

Over-dominating children, dinning well into them the fact that we think that under no circumstances can any action or word of theirs be seriously worthy of consideration, constantly rebuking them for their "persistence," does incalculable harm. Every time we needlessly interrupt a child's work, every time we check him without reason in carrying out some small scheme of his own, we are using our will instead of helping him to strengthen his. Michael was absorbed in his drawing one day. "Run and fetch your new teddy to show Donald," said Nurse, when a small guest had been sent up to the nursery for amusement. Michael protested —even after years under a tyrannical Nannie he still retained remnants of his native childish concentration. But Nurse, of course, won in the end. The child's purpose was ruthlessly set aside in order to please a chance visitor. Yet next time Michael fails to settle to his work, when it is convenient that he should be quiet, he, not Nurse, will be blamed.

Of course, the strong will must be rightly directed—that is equally important as that it should be persistent. There are numbers of people who are strong enough in following out a certain course of action—but it is too often a mistaken course. Here again the trouble begins, in nine cases out of ten, in the nursery. The small child who is always contrary, who always wants to do one thing when Nurse wants him to do another, is father of the man whose

actions habitually end in anti-social directions. But in the great majority of cases the child is not in the first instance to blame. The root of the difficulty generally lies in the fact that the child has a naturally strong will and has never been allowed sufficient outlet for it in harmless directions. Gradually, after being checked first in one way and then in another, he begins to harbour a faint sense of injustice ; desperately he insists on asserting himself. And the only way, he feels, in which he can manage this, is to do always the exact opposite of what is required of him. But I have written before of the contrary child and will not enter into more detail here. Only let us remember that contrariness in the nursery is a serious danger-signal, especially in connection with this business of training the will. The trouble lies in over-dominating the child.

Once this desire to dominate the child is conquered, the problem of helping him to train his will becomes a relatively simple one.

First we must consistently take the attitude that the child is *capable* of doing things. We must be scrupulously careful never to rob him of his power of initiative. "Peter *can* do up his shoe himself," said the toddler. The wise nurse agrees. "Of *course* Peter can." The unwise one sweeps the child's protest aside and insists on fastening the button herself on the ground that she is in a hurry. "I can't make this line go straight," sighed a boy of six. "You will in a minute," said his mother cheerfully, and when

she found he was seriously discouraged, she gave him just that fraction of help he needed to achieve his purpose before his energy flagged.

It is of the utmost importance to imbue children with the idea of achievement. We must provide the right kind of occupation for our children at each succeeding stage, so that they may retain their native love of work, *and we must show them that we respect their labour.* We are quite justified in asking a child to put his bricks back in the box rather than leave them in an untidy heap on the floor, but it is heartless to sweep away the beginnings of a magnificent bridge when it is clearly the child's intention to complete the bridge on the morrow. How can we expect the child to be purposive in his work when we clearly show him we think that work of no account ? Of course a *corner* in the nursery is the proper place for building, but of such details the child can easily be reminded before he starts work.

Another way in which we can aid the child to train his will is to help him to grasp, as soon as he is intellectually capable of doing so, the connection between cause and effect. So often we are very sentimental in preventing children from feeling the results of their actions. Three-years-old, rushing along the garden path, is warned time and again that gravel is hard and gritty. Why not let him fall once, and find out the fact for himself ? The principle can be applied in very many ways. Pamela, aged four,

grumbled at the nursery pudding. "Smith, please take away Miss Pamela's plate; she doesn't care for the sweet," said her mother. A few minutes later, big tears were discovered coursing down Pamela's cheeks. "It wasn't *such* a bad pudding, after all!" she murmured. The rejected portion was sent for Alas! it had already been given to the cat. But Pamela learned a valuable lesson as to the nature of cause and effect; most effectually was she shown that every action has a result.

Of course it is necessary to be consistent in teaching this lesson. If one day Pamela is allowed to grumble freely about her food and another day the dish is removed immediately she begins to complain, she is apt to feel very strongly the injustice of the treatment meted out to her. The child must inevitably form his standard of behaviour from those about him. Therefore it is essential that the standard should be undeviating. It must be maintained under all circumstances, by all grown-ups in authority over the child.

These are some of the general principles involved in training the will and are applicable generally to all young children—babies, toddlers or those of Kindergarten age. But it is well to remember that the will of the normal child passes through several distinct phases of development, and requires special treatment and encouragement at each stage.

CHAPTER XXII

FORMING HABITS

In whatever environment a child is placed, he will form habits. Whether these are useful or the reverse depends not upon him but upon the educator. At birth, the baby is a thing of reflexes with but one instinct—that of sucking—strongly developed. By the time he is a week old he is the creature of habit. It is astonishing how soon habits are formed—I observed in my small daughter, as early as the fifth day of life, the opening of the mouth to be fed immediately her toilet was completed. She could hardly have *remembered* that this was her feeding-time, for according to the psychologists the development of memory is a later growth, but because one process had followed another several times, her reactions with regard to these processes had become to some extent stereotyped. As a coat once folded tends to fall again into the original creases, so an action performed even once tends to be repeated. All nervous currents tend to leave their traces in the paths traversed and the younger the individual the more impressive the tendency.

This is both an alarming thought and an inspir-

ing one. It is obvious that one cannot afford to make mistakes in dealing with children for bad habits are formed exactly as easily as good ones; even one impression is of importance either way and extraordinarily difficult to eradicate. But it is also true that good habits are formed in the dawn of life very easily indeed. That is what makes education possible. A well-known psychologist has pointed out that if actions did not tend to become habitual we should be thoroughly exhausted after we had finished dressing in the morning. Each action would have to be considered minutely, our whole intellect brought to bear upon its completion every time it was performed. Naturally there would be no mental or nervous energy to spare for any work outside the every-day routine. But, fortunately, the human organism is so constructed that oft-repeated actions do not take the whole of our attention. Their control is relegated to the region of the spinal cord, and the higher brain is left free to think of other matters.

It is obvious that no child can make much intellectual progress until a certain number of habits are formed. Therefore from the day of birth, training must begin. This is the first great principle to bear in mind in this question of forming habits—start as early as possible. Babies must not be humoured when they cry to be nursed. They must wait for their regular feeding times, they must lie quietly in their cots

when the hour for sleep arrives. If the child is humoured once, he will put up a fight to be humoured next time, and not only will his physiological processes be disorganised but the development of character is also arrested to a greater or less extent.

Equally important is it to notice the start of a bad habit. Many babies, for instance, early learn to suck their thumbs and before long they are thoroughly in its grip. If long persisted in, the habit is practically impossible to break. I know of one mother at the moment who is trying to cure her three-year-old son of sucking his thumb. Probably she never will. Later on, instead of his thumb, the boy will suck sweets; later still, he will probably become a confirmed cigarette smoker. *The* moment to break the habit occurred when the thumb *first* found its way to the tiny mouth.

No matter what care is taken, a few bad habits do seem to develop spontaneously. A far larger number, however, are directly imitated. It is impossible always to prevent this—Dr. Eric Pritchard, for instance, tells a story of a baby boy who learnt to make such a faithful imitation of the steam siren he had constantly heard on board ship that his parents were requested to leave more than one hotel—but in many cases, more care should be taken over the selection of nurses and playmates. One child with a nervous twitch may infect a whole class of children, and if nurse's aspirates elude her even occasionally,

you need not be surprised if your small son talks of 'ouses and 'orses.

When a child has, in one way or another, formed a bad habit, it is usually best not to draw his attention to it. This rule, of course, has its exceptions—the only way to deal with the baby who imitated the steam siren, for instance, would be to connect each practice with something unpleasant like a smack—but generally speaking, the more a child's attention is directed to an action, especially a nervous action, the more he tends to persist in it. This is not "cussedness" on his part; he finds it psychologically impossible to do otherwise. As an amateur driving a motor car drives into the very lamp-post he is striving to avoid, so the child performs the one action he is determined not to perform. Instead of telling the child not to do this and not to do that, then, we are better advised to distract his attention from the undesirable action. When the nervous child is unconsciously biting his nails, send him on some small commission involving the use of his hands; when the toddler, becoming wildly excited, lapses into his customary habit of stamping his feet, ask him to dance like a fairy. "Don't" is a word at a discount in the education of to-day, in no case more than in the formation of desirable habits and the eradication of bad ones.

Any tolerable educator should be able to bring up the child in such a way that by the time he is eight he has a stock of good useful habits and

few bad ones. But if there are a number of objectionable actions which will persist in spite of all efforts to the contrary then a doctor should be consulted. Persistent wrinkling of the forehead, stammering, biting of the lips, twitching of the mouth, are evidences of nervous unrest which should not be overlooked. Drastic changes in the child's régime are indicated here. In general, however, such tricks should not develop if the child is healthy, well-managed, and living in a wholesome environment.

CHAPTER XXIII

ON THE USES OF SUGGESTION IN EDUCATION

A PLEASANT little story comes from an old book. "A gentleman having led a company of children beyond their usual journey, they began to be weary and all cried to him to carry them on his back, but because of their multitude he could not do that. 'But,' says he, 'I'll get horses for us all'; then, cutting little wands out of the hedges as ponies, and a great stake as a charger for himself, this put mettle into their little legs and they rode cheerily home." Dr. John Brown, when re-telling this story, pronounced it "a piece of innocent fun." It is a good deal more than that. The modern psychologist would call it a very valuable piece of suggestion. The children, mounting themselves in imagination on ponies, forgot their fatigue and what would ordinarily have been a most wearisome return journey straightway became an enchanting ride.

Though the power of suggestion in education has only recently been recognised, lovers of children have always, albeit unconsciously, known its value. Karl Ewald, in his book, "My Little Boy," proudly tells this tale of one of the child's ancestresses. "She was left forsaken and poor, with six children and no husband. One day, she came home at supper time and had nothing but

three wheaten biscuits. She divided them into pieces—twelve pieces—two for each of the children; she herself had eaten at the King's table and needed no food for a week at least. One piece was sweet soup with bigger sops in it than anyone had ever seen. The other was just the daintiest roast goose. Her eyes shone while she told the tale. The children's eyes shone. They pretended to spill the soup and got scolded for it. They played at not being able to swallow all the goose. *They rose up from the table satisfied and rejoicing.*" The italics are mine. These last nine words give the story its point. How potent the power of suggestion, to make six hungry children feel happy and well-fed on a meal of three wheaten biscuits! I have no doubt that that meal benefited them as much as any they had taken in their lives! The nature of his thought makes all the difference to a child's physical and mental and moral well-being.

Take, for instance, the effect of suggestion on a child's physical health. There are nurseries in which the child is always being warned not to over-tire himself, always being asked "how he feels," nurseries in which the child's general health and the state of his appetite are the subject of constant comment. How *can* children brought up in this enervating atmosphere grow up physically healthy?—from babyhood it has been suggested to them that sickness is always to be expected; naturally enough they tend to sickness rather than to health. Children brought

up in nurseries where no comment on health is made in their hearing, where there is no talk of "nerves" or fatigue, stand a much better chance in life.

Equally potent is the force of suggestion on the mental side. Take the child who is considered a dunce at school. In nine cases out of ten, probably, that child is as bright as the other children of his class, but he is so convinced of his stupidity that he is paralysed by the thought of it, and is quite unable to make any effort to overcome it. This seems more particularly true where a child is considered dull at Mathematics. In very many cases he fails to make progress, not because he is incapable of understanding the meaning of figures and symbols, but because from the first he has been led to think that Mathematics are difficult.

But suggestion, good or ill, is of even greater importance from the point of view of its effect on the child's conduct. We all know the child who is considered a veritable limb of Satan. The more discerning amongst us will have observed how often he seems to be naughty merely because naughtiness is expected of him. I obtain very striking instances of this sometimes amongst the toddlers at one of the Infant Welfare Centres I attend. The mothers here are very fond of telling me how naughty their children are, how wilful, how contrary. The little things are especially troublesome when the time comes to go home—they cling to their little chairs, hold

on firmly to the clinic toys and absolutely refuse to be dressed. The more insistent the mother becomes, the more obdurate the child. Yet more than once I have found that all that is needed to relieve the *impasse* is to bend down to the little person and say, kindly and with great assurance, "I *know* Mary"—or Alys, or Marian, as the case may be—"is a good girl." As a rule the effect is instantaneous. Mary cannot resist the suggestion that she *is* a good girl; straightway she feels compelled to act as a good girl.

The behaviour of the clinic children yields another striking illustration of the power of suggestion on children's conduct. Amongst the toddlers there are several of seventeen or eighteen months who are still rather unsteady on their legs and who frequently sit down unexpectedly on the floor. Invariably, a baby looks at his mother to see what *she* thinks of the mishap. If the mother's face expresses a smiling unconcern, Baby usually picks himself up and thinks no more about it; if the mother shows great alarm and rushes to the rescue, the child generally bursts into tears—he is not hurt but he thinks that he must be hurt if his mother makes such a to-do.

These are specific instances of the power of suggestion, but its real value in education lies in the fact that its effect is cumulative. Through suggestion we may convey to our children the impression that physical fitness is something to be proud of, that work and effort are worth while,

that courage and valour and perseverance are virtues worth cultivating.

Of course, we need discretion in using suggestion. Ellen Key gives a story of two fathers, both of whom believed in its value, but one used it with common sense—and the other didn't. Strolling along the beach with their small sons, they came to a stretch that was particularly rough and shingly. The boys complained that the stones hurt their bare feet. "Oh, nonsense," said one of the fathers, "the stones aren't rough." The remark, being palpably untrue, did not help the children at all. But the other father received the complaint intelligently. "Yes, the stones are rough, aren't they?" he remarked easily, as he began to walk over them. Here the suggestion was of value—the boys realised that although the stones were rough, as they said, such trifling inconveniences were not really worth considering, and they picked their way without further ado.

We must beware of using what is called "contra-suggestion." The teacher who says to a troublesome pupil, "Don't look round," is not helping himself at all. He is suggesting to the child that he *should* look round. The same rule holds in the nursery. Such commands as "Don't be naughty," "Don't do this," "Don't do that," should never be heard. Rather let us concentrate on giving good positive suggestion to our children, on giving them so many right ideas that they have no time or inclination to encourage wrong ones.

CHAPTER XXIV

CHILDREN'S GRIEVANCES

HERBERT SPENCER used to lament "the curse inflicted on their offspring by parents ignorant of the laws of life." And in truth this is enough to sadden anyone. Even in these days children suffer much from our failure to appreciate their inmost needs. Probably present-day knowledge of the child's physical requirements is sound enough; but, without doubt, our understanding of his mental and moral needs and the laws of his spiritual unfolding is still inadequate.

That is one of the counts upon which children might justifiably feel aggrieved were they conscious of our shortcomings. We fail to understand the child's real nature; we treat him as a miniature edition of ourselves, and expect him to behave, in a world fashioned by adults for adults, as though he were one of our own kind. Ellen Key describes the plight of the child in her essay on education. "The need for peace," she says, "is never greater than in the years of childhood; an inner peace under all external unrest. The child has to enter into relations with his own infinite world, to conquer it, to make it the object of his dreams. But what does he experience? Obstacles, interference, correc-

tions, the whole livelong day. The child is always required to leave something alone, or to do something different, to find something different, or want something different from what he does, or finds or wants. He is always shunted off in another direction from that towards which his own character is leading him. All this is caused by our tenderness, vigilance, and zeal in directing, advising and helping the small specimen of humanity to become a complete example in a model series. . . . The educator wants the child to be finished at once and perfect."

Think of the ways in which we interfere with our children ! The toddler is blamed for " naughtiness,"when he fingers objects with the laudable desire to find out all about them ; we do not take into consideration the fact that the young child's eyes are still very uneducated, and that he, therefore, needs to supplement sight with touch. He is blamed for being noisy and restless ; we do not take into consideration the little child's peculiar need for activity. He is often coerced into learning reading and writing and arithmetic when his interests, in the early stages of his life, are obviously concentrated on the ways of animals and plants and the wonderful things you can make with your hands ; we do not respect his intellectual characteristics. The boy or girl at the hobbledehoy stage is frequently reprimanded for clumsiness ; we have little patience with immaturity. The child's reactions are too often measured by adult standards. We have

not enough reverence for, nor enough understanding of, the physiological and psychological laws that govern his behaviour.

It is because we are so desperately set on making the child conform to certain quite inessential adult usages, because we are so eagerly bent on making him at all costs good-mannered, quiet and tractable, that we are frequently driven to extreme measures in "managing" him. A child placed in a wholesome and suitable environment, allowed to develop in accordance with the laws of his own being, allowed to behave as a child would normally behave, needs little managing and even less interference. If he is given the chance to do and to make, his activity will not tend to run into undesirable channels; if he is allowed reasonable opportunity to carry out his own little projects, if these projects are respected and appreciated, as they should be, the adult will not become too dictatorial, and the child will not develop that revolt against authority which is manifested in the form of disobedience. . . . If he is kept always in a quiet and suitable environment, and not removed from it to suit the whim of adults, he will not develop that feeling of overstrain which is a very potent cause of naughtiness. But if the child is commanded always to be quiet when it is his nature to be noisy, if he is given work unfitted to his physiological and psychological stage of development, if he is constantly ordered about without regard to his inner

necessities, then trouble will ensue. Then it is that the child must be "managed," and very doubtful methods are oftentimes employed.

Fear is a weapon used much too often in dealing with children. It is surprising how many nursery bogies there are, all sorts of black men and woolly hands and headless goblins taking the place that rightfully belongs to fairies and other beautiful fancies. The other day a woman with two children of her own was telling me how much frightened she was at a remark made to her at the age of three by a thoughtless grown-up. A piece of black, charred paper fell from the chimney into the grate. "What's that?" asked the little one. "That's Old Nick coming after you," was the careless reply. An adult who makes remarks of this kind to children has evidently not the slightest conception of their nature and their difficulties. She is used to finding children troublesome, and all her efforts are directed towards cowing them into subjection. Of this I write more fully in another chapter.

The jealousy sometimes aroused in the nursery is, perhaps, even worse than fear. We all know the pet angel child who is constantly held up as a pattern to others. She is nurse's favourite because she gives no trouble, and nurse does not bother to conceal the fact. The more troublesome children, who are also, perhaps, of finer calibre, envy that child, and the habit of jealousy is formed. Thus is the character of the little child, who comes to us so eager, so full of love

and joy, marred for life. Jealousy is often a very powerful incentive to action; but however apparently beneficial the immediate result from such a stimulus, we are never justified in employing it.

Emulation is closely akin to jealousy. It is criminal to arouse it in small children. The baby is born with the urge to develop—he kicks to make himself physically strong; through spontaneous play with fingers and toes, with light and shadow, he exercises his growing intelligence. Some one has said that he performs no action through all his infancy that will not make him a stronger, wiser baby. He is instinct with the urge to improve. Very often by too much interference in the early years, we rob him of this desire. He climbs on his high chair, for instance, exercising his muscles to their great benefit, but we are fearful of his safety and make him try something less dangerous and difficult; or he fixes his attention on some little task he has set himself, and we needlessly divert him from it to something else. Then, after having ruined his powers of persistence and effort, we try to develop these qualities in him again through the desire to outstrip others.

"This woman," some of my readers will probably remark at this point, "is obviously a crank. She evidently believes that all children are perfect angels." I don't. Children are born with evil propensities as well as good ones; mental defects are transmitted as well as physical

ones. But there is no reason why, in a perfectly wholesome environment, these evil propensities should ever develop. On the other hand, education, rightly conceived, lies in seizing on all the good points in the child and developing these to the greatest possible extent. The normal child is naturally curious, for instance; he is naturally active; he is eager to learn; he is observant; he is persistent; he has great powers of concentration. These characteristics must be encouraged. When the child asks intelligent questions, it is imperative that we should answer them or lead him to find out the answers for himself; it may be inconvenient to think out the answer at the moment, but it is worth doing for the child's sake. When he is bent on investigating something new and strange in the environment, encourage him to pursue his researches. By judicious encouragement all the child's good points may be strengthened.

But *the* way to develop splendid character in children is to bring them into contact with adults of splendid character. This sounds too obvious to be worth mentioning, but it is exceedingly difficult to put the principle into practice. Yet, it is imperative that we demand no more of our children than we demand of ourselves. A wise woman has said: "Where the faults of children are concerned we strain at gnats, but they are daily expected to swallow the camels of grown people." When children observe the difference between the adult standard and the standard

designed for them, they may quite legitimately feel aggrieved. This is only a trivial instance, but it serves as an example of the way in which *we* strain at gnats and expect children to swallow camels.

A very breezy visitor called at the home of a small boy of five. "Hallo, Tommy," she called out cheerily. "Hallo," responded Tommy, amiably. "You *should* say, 'Good-morning,'" corrected his mother. Yet, surely, it was scarcely fair to expect the child to rise to a higher standard of good manners than the grown-up visitor. The only effective way of training children is to show them by daily—even hourly—example what we want them to become.

If only we realised the potential perfection of the child, if we fully apprehended the significance of Froebel's dictum that "education is passive, following; not prescriptive, categorical, interfering," we should strive to understand the child more fully and many of children's grievances would be redressed. Each little one would be received into the world as a tiny individual who must be allowed to develop as far as possible on his own lines. The ideal environment must be such that bad qualities are not allowed to develop, and our chief care must be to shield the child from all harmful influences, physical, mental or moral.

It is necessary, especially for parents, to bear this principle in mind; but to make the world a fit place for children to live in, it is essential

that the community as a whole should cultivate a sense of responsibility towards the child. "Here is the little healthy child," says Dr. Lionel Tayler,[1] "that Christ would set in the midst of us, to think over, to hold in our mental perspective, to try to understand what its gifts are. Its nature-given trust that its powers are there to be ripened; its obvious potentialities; its uncontaminated soul—nature's best picture newly-drawn; senses, like a clean, unsullied piece of paper, waiting for wholesome experiences to be written on them; purposefully fulfilling itself like a seed, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn at length. Here is the little defenceless child, and here are we adults who have the power now, as other adults once had over us when we were children. What are we going to do? Are you a parent? There is your little child of two-and-a-half years; are you going to let it mix indiscriminately with children, catch bodily fevers and spiritual contagions; are you going to let it be handled by strangers, or during these childish years, from the third to the seventh after birth, are you going to be, by the influence of your home, its own protecting surroundings? If so, you must know something of nursery hygiene, of child development, of modern home kindergarten teaching along the lines of the great masters, Séquin and Groos. Are you going to fail your child or not? Are you a doctor or a nurse? How are you going to

[1] "Stages of Human Life." (Published Murray.)

advise the parent? Are you a statesman? What is your policy? Do you really know, have you honestly investigated, what is the best policy for that child's upbringing?

More knowledge—that is what we need to redress children's grievances. And more reverence for child-nature. If we possess these, we shall spare no effort to rear our children in an atmosphere where all their potentialities have a chance to develop. And we shall love other children as our own. When the community as a whole cultivates a sense of responsibility to the little child, there will be no more exploitation of children on the films for purposes of financial profit; there will be no more ill-treatment of children by ignorant or brutal parents. The spirit of love for childhood will be abroad, and it will penetrate into the darkest corners and the most squalid homes. When we love and reverence all children and know more of their needs, there will be more playgrounds for them, more opportunities for rightly-directed play. The needs of the little child of pre-school age will be met; even in these days of baby-welfare clinics and health service for the elementary schools, the requirements of the toddler too old for the cradle and too young for school are often overlooked.

We all need more knowledge of children. We all need to express our love for them by some kind of service. But it is for parents to lead the way. It is for them to show how happily and

healthily and splendidly children may grow in the right atmosphere. It is for them to put into practice in everyday life the principles that should be applied to the bringing up of all children. It is for them, primarily, to redress the grievances of childhood.

CHAPTER XXV

MISUNDERSTOOD CHILDREN

In the big sunny kindergarten room, a group of children were clustering eagerly round a tub of water in which swam three ducklings. The ducklings were a new importation and therefore the centre of attraction at the moment. Most of the children could see them well, but on the outskirts of the crowd stood a little one of two years old who could not catch so much as a glimpse of a tail feather.

The little face fell. Two-Years-Old *did* so much want to see the ducklings. For a moment or two he stood absorbed in deep reflection. Plainly he was thinking of a way out of his difficulty. Then light dawned. He hurried to the other side of the room and began to drag a chair towards the group.

Just then a young student saw what he was doing. "Poor Peter," she sympathised. "Couldn't you see?" And, putting the chair back, she carried him over on her shoulder to see the ducklings. But Peter did not cast a single glance at them. He hid his head on the teacher's shoulder and silently he wept.

This is a typical instance of the way in which

most children are misunderstood. Peter wanted to find his own way out of his difficulty. He had found it. He was proud of his solution to the problem that faced him. He wanted to put it into practice. He was going to succeed. Why must some troublesome grown-up come along at the wrong moment and spoil all his plans ?

The trouble is, grown-ups and children are at different stages of evolution and thought. To a grown-up it seems that a child needs help because he is so helpless, and very often we do not stop to observe our children long enough to find out what it is they themselves wish to do, and how we can help them to do it. Thus it is that a child's desire for independence, his capacity for initiative and for original thought—most wholesome elements of character—are ruthlessly suppressed, all unknowingly, by the most amiable and well-meaning adults.

Madame Montessori gives another instance of this. She was watching a beautiful, smiling baby of about eighteen months, trying to fill his little pail by shovelling gravel into it. But it was time to go home and Nurse had to put the child in his perambulator. The child, disturbed in his work, burst into loud sobs, so his kindly nurse, to comfort him, picked up the bucket, herself filled it to the brim with gravel, and put it in the carriage with him. But with all her kindness, she had totally misinterpreted the meaning of the child's distress. He was crying because he had been deprived of the joy of filling the bucket by

his own efforts. "His unconscious aim was his own self-development; not the external fact of a pail full of little stones. . . . As a matter of fact, if he had filled his pail he would probably have emptied it out again in order to keep on filling it up till his own inner self was satisfied. It was the feeling of working towards this satisfaction which a few moments before, had made his face so rosy and smiling—and she who loved him, believing that his aim was to possess some pebbles, made him wretched."

The story of the little boy, his aunt and the turkey also serves to show how children are misunderstood. In the farmyard there was a turkey whom the child admired incessantly. He would watch it for hours and talked about it at meal-times and play-times. One day an old aunt came to see the little boy and she asked him: "Do you like me?" "Yes," answered the child. "Why?" persisted the aunt stupidly, hoping, no doubt, to have her vanity tickled by the answer. "I like you 'cos you look like a turkey," murmured the child, dreamily, still thinking of the wonderful bird in the farm-yard. He was severely punished for impertinence and he never understood why, for he had been quite sincere in comparing his aunt to what he thought was the prettiest bird in the world.

But apart from these misunderstandings, which arise because the grown-up is not able to perceive the child's point of view, there are also types of children who are habitually misunderstood.

Take the case of the highly imaginative child. He is always "romancing," and he is always being pulled up sharply for "telling lies," whereas his only faults are that he has a very vivid imagination, and has not yet learned how to control it or how to distinguish between truth and fiction. The story of the little girl of five who came in and reported to her mother that she had seen a lion is well known. The mother, horrified at her child's depravity in describing a yellow dog as a lion, bade her go at once to her bedroom, and pray to be forgiven. A few minutes afterwards the child returned, but the mother could see no trace of penitence on her face. "Did you tell God you were sorry?" said the mother. "Oh, yes, mamma. He said, 'That's all right, little girl, I've often mistaken that yellow dog for a lion myself!'" I suspect the young lady was not quite sincere in this remark, but I am as certain that she had not in the first place intended to tell a lie. Such a child needs sympathetic help in making the distinction between truth and fiction. As Alice Meynell says the normal child perceives quite well the difference between "Let's believe!" and "Let's pretend!" but the highly-strung child often cannot quite differentiate without some co-operation from mother or nurse.

The sensitive child also is frequently misunderstood. Often when he is corrected, even very gently, he feels the correction so much that he cannot speak. He is then often accused of being

sullen when, in reality, his little heart is almost bursting with distress over some trifling wrong-doing.

But on the whole, it is the child who is called "dull" who is most often the victim of misunderstanding.

There are some children who never, through all their schooldays, win a single prize. They seem to work hard, they appear to try hard, but term after term they come home dejected that they have again had no success. Of course, every parent wants his child to shine, but it is advisable to be very careful with these "dull" children. If, when they strive their hardest, we still seem unsatisfied, they are very apt to sink into despair and to become the victims of an "inferiority complex," which may cause them misery all their lives. Many a man who could do well in after life has been permanently handicapped because he has the idea that, not having been any good at school, he can never be any good.

The first step to take with a dull child is to ascertain that all is well from the physical point of view. In the old days children were often classed as defective whereas in reality adenoids were responsible for all the mischief. This, in these modern days, is not likely to occur, but there may be some difficulty with regard to gland-function which is not so readily recognised as adenoids, yet just as potent in working mischief. Psychological assistance, too, may be

needed. In any case, it is always wise to take the "dull child" to a good doctor before laying the blame on his mentality.

Sometimes a child previously considered bright falls off without any warning at eight or nine years old. Sometimes the child who has been good, or even brilliant, at his school work until he is thirteen suddenly becomes quite dull mentally and fails to make any real progress for some years. Formerly this was considered a "naughty" stage and treated accordingly; to-day it is recognised that periods of physical growth alternate with periods of mental growth and the treatment of the child at this time is more efficient and more sympathetic.

It often happens, however, that the dull child is dull more or less throughout his school life and that no physical or mental or psychological defect can be discovered. Even then parents need not despair, and, above all things, they must not blame their children. St. Thomas Aquinas was considered very slow. Froebel, to take an example from a much later age, was considered too stupid to go to the University. Francis Thompson made a complete failure of his school and college studies. Yet all these men did great things in after life.

The truth is, the child who is apparently dull is often working things out in his own time and in his own way, and it is then the very dullness and apathy of his childhood that make possible the brilliance and originality of the man. Give your

children leisure to think things out for themselves. Children often learn more in a single hour spent lying on their backs gazing at the clouds than from the most brilliant lesson we can give them.

CHAPTER XXVI

FEAR BOGEYS OF CHILDHOOD

It should be made a criminal offence deliberately to awaken fear in a child. Once aroused, fear is so difficult to quell. Bogeys that come to life in the nursery may haunt us all our days, spoiling our best efforts, preventing us from achievement. Fear dwells in the life of many; always just below the level of consciousness lurks the terrible and unexplained dread of the unknown.

There are so many nursery bogeys. It is frightful to think of all the black men and woolly hands and rag-men with their sacks that have been invented to frighten the nervous child into model behaviour. "If you don't sit still you know what will happen," says Nurse ominously—and straightway a horror of the unknown enters the child's soul. "If you don't go to bed punctually to the moment, the black-man-on-the-stairs will catch you"—and henceforth the stairway becomes a region of terror to the little one. Where is the black man now? he wonders apprehensively as he rushes up to bed. Then, when he gains his room, he shuts the door with feverish haste, bent on creeping into bed as soon as

possible. Certainly Nurse has succeeded in getting him to bed in good time, but Mummy wonders in vain why her small son is developing night terrors.

A schoolmaster, one of the best schoolmasters of to-day, went once to his baby-room and found a little child of four screaming in abject terror. The infant teacher held him in her arms and tried in vain to soothe him. As the schoolmaster drew nearer to enquire as to the cause of the trouble, he noticed a feather lying on the floor and stooped to pick it up. Immediately the child's creams redoubled in force. "It's the feather that's frightening him," explained the teacher. The child's sobs only ceased after he had watched the feather destroyed and thrown into the waste-paper basket. On enquiry, it was found that the maid who looked after the little one at night had discovered his dislike for feathers and had hit upon the idea of laying one on his pillow to prevent him from turning over to disturb her in her sleep. The ruse had been successful enough; for nights together the child had lain awake afraid even to stir a finger lest the feather touch him. But the obsessional fear of feathers thus created had robbed him of joy for months.

It is so easy to govern by fear. Almost any child—certainly all children of fine calibre—can be frightened into "good behaviour." Doctors, policemen, school-teachers, all of whom should be considered by the child as his very good

friends, can only too easily be made into bogeys by dark threats as to their powers over little boys and girls. The small child is peculiarly prone to fear—he is so little and the world so terrifyingly big. He feels inferior to grown-ups on account of his weakness and ignorance, and is impelled to take all they say on trust. That is why the educator should make a special point of encouraging fearlessness in the child.

There are a good many ways of doing it.

In the first place, the child should never be frightened unnecessarily. With a little imagination it is easy enough to avoid this. The theory that the quickest and surest way to teach a child to swim is to throw him into the water out of his depth—can that have been perpetrated by a person of any imagination ? Think of the horror of being immersed in cold water with the knowledge that the bottom is far beyond the reach of one's toes. Probably nowadays few people would adopt such drastic methods, but we cannot be too careful in avoiding all frightening punishments and all shocks if we would produce fearless children. To be locked in a dark cupboard is one of the worst horrors a finely-balanced, highly-strung child can know. Nor does he think it a joke when out of a harmless-looking camera jumps a queer paper snake. Trick toys may be amusing to grown-ups, but they are frequently objects of terror to little children. It is of no use to ridicule the child for what seem to us to be groundless fears. Children

do not look at life with adult eyes and they develop fear of the strangest things. A little lad of four the other day showed a marked fear of an orange dress I was wearing. It was no use to attempt to laugh him out of it, the only thing to do was to change the dress and encourage him to smooth and play with it. When he saw me doing this, he soon lost his fear and approached.

The unfamiliar is always frightening. All animals look with suspicion on any strange object. But the young child is surrounded with strange objects, and we can only teach him to be fearless if we familiarise him with the world gently and with understanding. We must answer his questions about the new things of the environment patiently and encourage him to investigate with his own hands and eyes as much as he will. We must never make unnecessary mystery. Fear lurks in the unknown.

Above all, we must never *suggest* fear to a child. How often this is done! The baby begins fearlessly to climb on his high chair to the great benefit of his muscles. But what do we say? "Baby, you'll fall! Baby, get down!" And so we implant fear where no fear was. Children bring our hearts to our mouths by attempting the wildest feats. The prime achievement of one small boy of six was to jump the last seven steps of the stairway. This was most spectacular and frightening to watch, but we found much comfort in reflecting on the benefit to character that

resulted! Also it must be remembered that children at play very rarely hurt themselves at all seriously. They fall, if they fall, with relaxed muscles.

When a child does by chance hurt himself, his reactions are much influenced by ours. If we exclaim apprehensively at the sight of blood, he will be nervous too. But if it is washed away with little comment he will regard a graze or two as of little moment. The other day I had occasion to pass along Devonshire Street. From one of the filthy, squalid passages a tiny child of about three years old came tumbling down the steps. His little body was badly jolted and the little mouth began to quiver. There would have been a storm of sobs in a moment had not his father been standing by. "Whatever did you do that for?" he demanded, in such pretended astonishment that the child laughed. Sometimes one finds born educators in the slums.

Fear of failure looms large in the life of many children, and this, perhaps, is the worst and most destructive bogey of all. Millions of people today are living on the safety-first principle, pinned down to work unworthy of their powers because they dare not take reasonable risks to better themselves. They are afraid of trying new tasks because all their lives from nursery days on they have been dogged by fear of failure. When the little child in his optimism attempts difficult work let us encourage him. If he fails after real and serious effort, tell him that the result doesn't

matter a bit, that it's the work that counts. If he fails when he is within an ace of achievement, help him to the result he desires.

All this has an immensely important bearing on the child's whole life. "He's so tiny, he'll soon forget," said a mother when I remonstrated with her once for threatening her small son with unimaginable horrors. But the little child does not forget. Childish terrors may temporarily fade from his memory, but they live on in his unconscious mind, and the moment he is put to any extra stress, just at the moment he needs all his courage, they may rise into consciousness again. That is why there are so many fear-ridden people in the world to-day. That is why the educator has such a sublime opportunity in his work with the children in the nursery.

CHAPTER XXVII

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS IN THE NURSERY

"I AM having Betty psycho-analysed. She seems rather nervous about playing in front of me. She is always seeking my approval of her games." Thus a *very* modern mother to a friend. Betty was only four, but she was duly taken to a consulting psychologist and subjected to many hours of careful examination. This is no exaggeration; the incident really took place and in my hearing. Nor is Betty's case peculiar. Psycho-analysis is often considered as the panacea for all the ills of the mind and most of the ills of the body. Someone has even gone so far as to say that a professional psycho-analyst should take the place of the trained children's nurse, and a noted philosopher has recently remarked that children can only be safely trusted to average parents when they have reached the age of ten. Psycho-analysis is the rage of to-day.

Yet I wonder whether the parent who hands her children over to have their minds dissected is not making a big mistake. Here is the opinion of a prominent medical man writing in "The Lancet" recently: "While not denying that success may be achieved by this means in adoles-

cent and adult patients, yet the employment of psycho-analysis with children is neither desirable nor necessary."

Of course, it must be remembered that there are several schools of psycho-analysis, but it is the Freudian school that at present holds the field and it is this school that we are considering in this article. Its fundamental characteristic is that it regards sex as the central fact in human life. But it looks at life from the adult point of view, and herein lies its failure as applied to children. Psycho-analysis—that is to say, Freudian psycho-analysis—might conceivably be of benefit to adolescents and adults, because the facts and emotions that form the stock-in-trade of the professional analyst have either already obtruded themselves into consciousness or else lie very near the surface. Under these circumstances the skilful analyst can often reveal the mind of the patient to himself without causing undue shock.

With children the case is different. Psycho-analysis is undesirable with them because it is apt to stir up in them emotions that should lie dormant for many years to come. "The Freudian is acting like a child with a new toy," as Mr. Morton says in his recent book, "Childhood's Fears," and that is no doubt the reason Freudians are so insistent that the child has a complete sexual life of his own. It seems, however, far more reasonable to believe that in childhood all the *elements of sex* are present.

Thus, the little girl early takes a delight in self-adornment and the small boy loves to pose as a man of the world—but these elements are only synthesised completely later on. Just because they are present, however, it is exceedingly easy to force development and to make the child far too preoccupied with this side of life. It was a wise man who said, "Where the apple reddens never pry, lest we lose our Eden." The child will certainly lose his Eden if any one side of his nature is precociously developed by having too much attention focussed upon it. Further, the information that he is often given in the course of psycho-analysis leads him to take a distorted view of life, for his lack of knowledge cripples his power to reason. "The least contentious argument against the use of psycho-analysis is that the child's mind is not sufficiently developed to reason formally."

Fortunately there is no need to make use of psycho-analysis in the case of the normal child. *If all children lived in a perfectly wholesome environment, psycho-analysis would seldom be necessary even for adults. No "complexes" would be formed if children were always correctly treated in the nursery.* Take Betty's case, for example. Nervousness is certainly not a good sign in a child, and the possible cause for it should always be sought, but in this, as in many other instances, a little self-analysis on the part of the mother would have been far more to the point than any psycho-analysis of the child. Had the

mother cast her mind back she would probably have found that the child's nervousness dated from the time when she had been badly snubbed in her play. And the perfectly obvious cure would have been to take part in the little one's games, encouraging her to take the lead.

It should be possible for children to grow like flowers, easily, beautifully and unconsciously. Our care should be to adjust the circumstances of their environment so that they suffer no hindrance in development. Often because we are not in perfect sympathy with the child or because we are shocked at what we are apt to think depravity on his part, he forces thoughts and emotions back into his sub-conscious mind, although he longs to give them utterance. If only we had his true confidence, such repression need never take place. An American physician tells a story in illustration of this. The small son of a patient of hers came to his mother one morning and said: "Mother, I'm just bursting to say something," and the mother very wisely replied: "Well, say it. I certainly don't want you to burst." Whereupon the little lad whispered to her three absolutely unprintable words. Where he had heard them she could not imagine, but all she said was: "Well, do you feel better?" "What a relief," exclaimed the child. "I have just been bursting to say that to somebody." The child subjected to this sort of treatment has a good chance of growing up remarkably free from inhibitions of the wrong kind.

So often by laying emphasis on the wrong things we create a tendency in the child's mind which would not otherwise exist. Miss Margaret Drummond cites such a case in a paper published in the last number of the "New Era." Patricia, aged two, toddled to the table one day and snatched a scone from a plate, then crumpled it up in a hot little hand. The grown-ups present were greatly perturbed and made a quite unnecessary fuss. Henceforth Patricia *always* rushed to snatch whenever she saw any plate on the table. The circumstances surrounding the first incident had so impressed it upon her little mind that the impulse to snatch became obsessive. Had little notice been taken when first the snatching began, the action would probably not have been repeated.

If only children were brought up in a quiet and calm atmosphere where no unnecessary fuss is made, where there is full confidence between children and adults, where the laws of growth are respected, no direct psychological interference would ever be necessary. As a wise and witty Frenchman remarked "It has been said that there is much that is both good and new in psycho-analysis, but that which is good is not new and that which is new is not good." Most sensible parents will confirm his words, at least so far as children are concerned. The good in psycho-analysis lies in the fact that the patient has an opportunity to discuss his problems—but every wise educator in every age has recognised

the need of the child to talk freely and frankly. The new can hardly be commended. We would rather our children grew naturally and unconsciously instead of having their attention focussed on the intricacies of their own development.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CHILDREN AND THE MONEY SENSE

I had a penny,
A bright new penny,
I took my penny
To the market square.
I want a rabbit,
A little brown rabbit,
And I looked for a rabbit
'Most everywhere.

For I went to the stall where they sold sweet lavender
(" *Only a penny for a bunch of lavender!* ")
" Have you got a rabbit, 'cos I don't want lavender ? "
But they hadn't got a rabbit, not anywhere there.

. . . . . .

I had nuffin',
No, I hadn't got nuffiin',
So I didn't go down
To the market square,
But I walked on the common,
The old-gold common . . . .
And I saw little rabbits
'Most everywhere!

" *When We Were Very Young.*"—A. A. MILNE.

When one comes to think of it, the small boy in Mr. Milne's poem had realised one of the great truths of life. We may have pennies and tuppences and even " little white sixpences," and

still fail to secure what we really want. Money, in short, does not bring happiness. When we have " nuffin' " we may yet have everything.

Small children are usually clear-sighted enough to recognise this—albeit unconsciously. They know so much more than sophisticated grown-ups of the things that are really of value in life. The baby sets his affections, not on the expensive toys designed without any real knowledge of his needs, but on the bright piece of paper which flutters between his fingers and makes interesting crackling noises, or the gay rattle that can be shaken *ad infinitum*. Five-Years-Old, too, if he is wisely trained, enjoys the simple things of life the most. Bright pennies are fascinating play-things; silver threepenny pieces buy the toys and sweets he loves, but for all that, money is not *the* criterion of value to the healthy unspoiled child. Did you ever hear a child ask concerning his toy: " What did it cost ? " His invariable query is, " What can I do with it ? "

If we wish our children to be happy in after-life, to obtain a correct sense of values, to use money carefully and wisely, we shall do well to help them to keep their native simplicity. We shall show them from the first how much happiness is independent of money. We shall foster the love of learning. Toys and books the child needs, for his sense of ownership is strongly developed and its gratification will give him much joy, but although we shall adjourn to the toy-shop on special occasions—for Christmas and

birthdays for example—we shall keep his delight in simple things by helping him to make toys for himself from cream cartons, empty cotton-reels, sheets of cardboard and the like, and with the inexpensive materials obtainable from kindergarten shops aid him in creating playthings for his own happiness.

Wise parents, too, will never give the child a false idea of their financial status. I do not mean by this that a father should gravely inform his three-year-old son of the exact extent of his income !—but I do mean that it is a mistake to keep children from all knowledge of the hardships of life for fear that this may cast a shadow over their spirit. If parents deny themselves small luxuries because they feel unable to afford this or that, they should not strive particularly to hide the fact from their children. If a child early sees reasonable self-denial practised *cheerfully* and unobtrusively in his own home, he learns a lesson that he could never learn so successfully in later life. He grows up with the knowledge that it is the exception rather than the rule to be able to afford all material things one desires, but he also sees that the need for self-denial need in no way interfere with happiness.

But everyone requires a little money to spend as his individual needs and tastes decide. Even the small child of three or four loves to run into a shop and to exchange a penny for some small article he wants. Froebel declared that " a visit

to market is always a notch on the stick of the child's development," and he was probably scientifically correct in this, for the system of barter developed very early in the history of humanity and the life of each individual child recapitulates and epitomises the history of the race.

We need not be surprised, therefore, if on occasion the desire to buy becomes so strong in the child that he may appropriate someone else's money with which to trade. How can we develop in our little one some idea of *meum* and *teum* where money is concerned? Karl Ewald, the Danish writer, tells us in his charming book, "My Little Boy," how he solved the problem.

One day the child was sent by Petrine, the cook, to buy a pennyworth of biscuits. He went to the baker's and returned—with lollipops! The delightful father was not greatly perturbed —"I, Heaven be praised, have been a thief," he writes characteristically—but he realised that the time had come to teach the child the difference between his own and other people's pennies. So he had a wise conversation with him, too lengthy to quote here, during which he explained the point, and a few days later, in conclave with "my little boy's mother," it is decided that "my little boy shall have an allowance of a halfpenny per week. Every Sunday morning, that sum shall be paid to him, free of income-tax, out of the treasury, and he has leave to dispose of it entirely at his own pleasure. . . . We calculate,

with the aid of the almanac, that, if everything goes as heretofore, there will be fifteen Sundays before the summer holidays. We arrange a drawer with fifteen compartments and in each compartment we put a halfpenny. Thus we know exactly what we have and are able at any time to survey our financial status." This seems to me an ideal way of beginning to develop the money sense in children. It has ever so many advantages for very young children, over the bank or the Post Office. They want to *see* their money and know it is there. I am sure "my little boy" fingered his halfpennies a thousand times before the time came for him to spend them.

The first Sunday, of course, the halfpenny is turned straightway into a stick of chocolate, and after it is eaten the small boy feels rather sad to see one little empty space in the drawer. Father suggests that a top *might* have given more lasting pleasure, and together they go to look at a lovely red-and-green one in the shop-window over the road. And every day they look at it until next Sunday comes round, after making the shopkeeper "take a solemn oath to keep the top for us till Sunday morning, even if boys should come and bid him much higher for it." The top gives much more lasting joy than the chocolate stick, and no one regrets the second empty space in the drawer. On the third Sunday, however, it is divulged that the little boy wants a skipping rope, which costs *twopence-*

halfpenny. After long and careful consideration, and much counting of the halfpennies in the drawer, it is agreed that father shall advance the twopence-halfpenny and have a halfpenny from the drawer on each of the next five Sundays. This goes well for a time. For the first two or three Sundays, "it is simply an amusing thing that I should have the halfpenny," but on the fourth Sunday, "my little boy's face is sad. He *wants* a chocolate stick. "Of course, I'm full of the sincerest sympathy, but I can't help it. What's gone is gone." But later in the day the child suggests moving next Sunday's halfpenny into this Sunday's drawer. This state of things is repeated until "at last the blow falls and five long Sundays come in a row without the least chance of a halfpenny. . . . Where should they come from? They were there. We know that. They are gone. We spent them ourselves. . . . But during those drab days of poverty, we sit every morning over the empty drawer and talk long and profoundly about that painful phenomenon, which is so simple and so easy to understand and which one must needs make the best of."

I could not resist telling the story at length and quoting a good deal, because there is such a wonderful grasp of the child's psychology, and such a remarkable sense of what it is important a child should learn. First, the child must see and feel and touch his money, realise concretely the amount of it, estimate the possibilities of it.

Then he must realise that a halfpenny spent is a halfpenny spent, and no other halfpenny in the world can take its place. He must learn, too, that if in a time of stress one has money advanced or oneself takes the responsibility of realising on future expectations, sometime or other the hiatus must come when the money is gone.

These are hard lessons, but it is easier to learn hard lessons when they first come to one. The sentimentalist may feel pity for the child in his weakness and inexperience and try to make things easy for him, but all sensible parents must agree with Ellen Key when she says, "The thorns should never be picked from the child's roses." By all means let us plan for him an environment where he will not be overwhelmed by difficulties, but such small difficulties as do arise naturally in his limited experience, *let him fight himself.* There are certain facts in life which have to be learned, and this is one of them—the money that is spent is spent, and no one, kindest father or sweetest mother, has power to alter the fact.

Children from the first should be taught to keep accounts—at first, as young Ewald did, by taking tangible halfpennies from tangible boxes. Later on, as the child understands the meaning of symbols, he may have his own purse and his own little account-book.

There is another point of importance. *How* should children spend their money?

I think with the tiny child of three and four, it is hard to expect him to spend his weekly half-

penny on anyone but himself! We do grave mischief if we try to force the child to be unselfish in material ways in the period of life when he is normally most interested in himself. But as the child grows older and has a little more money, he begins to want to spend it occasionally on other people. Perhaps a halfpenny of the five or six-year-old's weekly penny may go occasionally on a few beads to string a bracelet for mother or an apple for father. With the older child, receiving threepence or fourpence a week, a penny or so might well go into the money-box (I saw a most delightful pussy-cat money-box at the Pomona toy-shop in Chelsea the other day) and the money used for buying birthday presents or some coveted treasure. If children show an inclination to do this, it should not be discouraged. The sentimentalist may say, "You have so *little*, dear. You are so kind, but you must keep the money for yourself." This is most decidedly *not* the right attitude. Twopence or threepence is *not* a little to the eight-year-old. To represent it as such is to spoil his pleasure in his small income and to make him conscious of his childishness.

Let us look at this matter of money through the child's eyes in another way too. Some people put any big money present or any pocket-money the child can spare into bank or post-office. Now we do not want children to squander money foolishly, nor do we want to stand in the way of parents prudently wishing to save money for

their children, but to put money in the bank or the post-office can mean nothing to the child under ten except that money, legitimately his, is forcibly taken away from him. Let him put the coins instead in the money-box cat; let him have the joy of fingering his money, of feeling the cat grow heavier and heavier. Then by the time he is twelve or fourteen, and is able to understand the function of a bank, he will be ready to "lay money by," as all sober citizens must. He will have learned the joy of saving as well as of spending, and is approaching the stage when he can handle quite a large amount of money with foresight and prudence.

CHAPTER XXIX

FESTIVALS IN THE NURSERY

MR. CHESTERTON has just made a pronouncement concerning the pleasures of the modern child. And his words are wondrous wise. "It seems to me," he said, in an interview the other day, "that this pleasure-mad generation has lost the art of enjoyment. It is in the condition of a child who has made the discovery that it likes jam, and has invaded the housekeeper's room to fill itself from pots on the shelves. Now a stomach full of raspberry jam is not a happy stomach. In my own childhood a treat was a great event. It stood out from a background of, I will not say dullness, but of duties, discipline and general uneventfulness. It was, in consequence, extraordinarily delicious when it came. It stirred the waters of routine. And because one lived in such an atmosphere one was always expecting something marvellous to occur, like Uncle Jehosephat suddenly descending from the ceiling. But now-a-days you hear children comparing cinema with cinema! Yes, indeed. Such a childhood is almost inconceivable to men of our years. It's as if we had compared Father Christmas with Father Christmas."

Mr. Chesterton's words give plenty of food for thought. The stomach full of raspberry jam is *not* a happy stomach, nor is the young mind happy when satiated with cinemas and pantomimes and toy bazaars. Treats should occur seldom enough to give the child pleasurable little shocks of excitement when they do come. The child's very delicately-adjusted nervous system cannot stand the strain of continual excitement. Further, if he lives too fast and is allowed to experience too much in the early years of life, he has no time to sort out his real impressions. The nature of the child is, normally, profoundly serious; he is an excellent little workman, willing to spend time and effort and thought on all he does; he does not crave continual excitement; but if his whole life is planned as a series of treats and thrills, he is forced into the habit of superficial living. He has no chance and no leisure to apprehend the full significance of anything. As he grows older, he becomes, of course, that most miserable of creatures, the bored human being. There is, for him, nothing new under the sun, no thrills of anticipation, no unknown delights.

But the child, like everyone else, needs a slight break in routine now and then—not a break that involves irregular hours, irregular meals, overexcitement, indigestion, nervous strain, but one that furnishes a little climax of joy. As a rule treats should be given in the home or in the homes of small friends living in similar circum-

stances. Occasionally, of course, there are attractions entirely suitable for children outside the home—Jean Stirling Mackinlay's Matinées for Children, the Margaret Morris dancers, are good examples of these. There have been some films of recent years, too, which any child would enjoy *and* profit by. "Little Robinson Crusoe of Paris," with Jackie Coogan in the title role; "The Covered Wagon," that fascinating story of the early Dutch emigrants' trek across the veldt, "Peter Pan," with its delightful child actress chosen to take the name-role by Sir James himself; nature pictures portraying the life history of the butterfly, or the development of the plant from seed to fruit, which make a child open his eyes in wonder; animal pictures with Rin-Tin-Tin and other wonder dogs of the screen for heroes; pictures in which Tom Mix, rather free with his pistol to be sure, but for all that a splendid virile hero for small boys to copy, takes principal part; geography pictures which show the wonders of the world—all these are worthy of the child's attention. But as a rule, it is best to plan treats in the home or the homes of friends. Let us make the *home* the centre of pleasurable living. All the young child's interests are naturally centred here. We confess ourselves inadequate if we are driven too often to providing outside entertainment for him.

Even the poorest parent can, if she wishes, celebrate Christmas and birthdays, Easter time, Hallowe'en in fitting manner. Let us remember

the essentials. On birthdays, for instance, our main object is to show the child we are glad he is alive. Presents to the child are only a symbol of this. Expensive toys and books are not necessary—indeed, they are not desirable—but by decorating the house, by little treats, we can show Peter that Mummy and Daddy are very, *very* glad he is alive. Why make a treat of sitting up late ? Children should be happy to be folded between cool sheets to rest. They will be, too, if they have been as active as they should have been during the day if no other idea is suggested to them, but there are any number of wholesome opportunities to give joy—a plate of sugared cakes for tea, the table decorated, a new game taught, a particularly favourite story told. All these things make a change in every-day life.

Coloured boiled eggs for breakfast, after an Easter egg hunt in the garden, make Easter a different day from all others, and the story of the Easter rabbit, who borrows eggs from the hens and colours them in his factory in the woods, pleases the child mightily.

We should not forget the spiritual aspect of festivals. Children are not nearly so materialistic as we are apt to think. In a little book, "The Child's House," the author, Marjory McMurchy, describes the thoughts and feelings of a child with faithfulness and charm. She sums up vividly the feelings of a child approaching the first Christmas she has consciously known. "Vanessa had been told that she had already

experienced several Christmasses, but as far as she was concerned this was a mistake. She might have taken part in celebrating Christmas as an unconscious member of her family; but as far as she was concerned, this was a mistake. . . . What *was* Christmas that would enable her to . . . fall into raptures over it? . . . She had explored the mind of everyone she knew to see if they thought it wonderful; and they all did. Priscilla, Maud, Hector, Rafe, her mother, her father even, Jane Sors who did the family washing, Martha who had been in the kitchen ever since Vanessa could remember, they all said that Christmas was Christmas, simply the biggest thing that Vanessa could imagine. . . . So Vanessa braced herself for Christmas. She clung to it tooth and nail lest any shred of Christmas should escape her. . . . The vague, intangible blessing that there was in Christmas trembled and grew vast before Vanessa's eyes. Her mind was always on tiptoe after it. Every little prayer, little repentance and little joy that Vanessa had ever known gathered themselves into Christmas, and drew her, fascinated, after them." Few of us will remember, as clearly as Miss McMurchy evidently does, the feelings with which we approached our first conscious Christmas. But all of us—even so hardened a one as old Scrooge—feel its atmosphere, the sense of anticipation and bustle and stir that surround it, and we can imagine how this must affect the small child.

Vanessa naturally tried to get more definite

details about Christmas, "these white, shining, beautiful, far-away towers on the very edge of December." She asked her elder sisters about it. They told her about the presents—presents for Mummy and Daddy, presents for all the children and their friends. Vanessa felt a slight sense of disappointment. She felt quite sure, somehow, that "Christmas wasn't candy; not picture-books, not a skipping rope, not a toy trumpet, nor a toy cart." Still, it was all she had to go on. She supposed that Christmas *must* just mean presents. One would be sure to be happy if one had presents. So Vanessa decided on a doll.

Now comes the tragedy of the story. Vanessa had her doll—a beautiful doll. But it did not bring her the happiness she expected. "She took the doll in her hands, held it up before her, and looked straight into its eyes. The doll looked back. Vanessa shook her head a little. Then she laid the doll in her arms and rocked it gently for a while as she knew mothers did with their babies. Where was the glory? Something inadequate and wooden about the doll smote her like a blow. Was this Christmas? This! The pressure of the hard body against her living bosom struck to her very heart. Had she made a mistake after all?"

Poor little Vanessa! She experienced at that moment a disappointment that probably hundreds of children experience every year. During the weeks before Christmas they have

been entertaining hopes and expectations of something wonderful and quite different from anything else—they would call it spiritual if they knew the word. Then, when the great day comes, they are given presents—Christmas Day seems merely a glorified birthday party without the sanction of anyone having a birthday. If we wish to celebrate Christmas in such a way that the child is fully satisfied, we must bear in mind all the time that Christmas owes its success the world over to the fact that it is a "season of peace and good-will." We celebrate the birthday of the Babe born in a manger nineteen hundred years ago by going out of our way to show love and good-feeling to others. The custom of giving presents to friends and relatives arose from the general desire to give others pleasure at Christmas-time—disappointment is inevitable, both for grown-ups and for children if the presents and parties remain, and that which once inspired them is fled. Giving as well as receiving is an essential part of Christmas joy; at this season of the year everyone—children included—must work to make everyone else happy.

There are ever so many things that children can do—and what joy there will be in the doing! There will be whisperings in the corners and mysterious doings of which Father and Mother must know nothing. There will be weeks of furious activity before Christmas with the hand-work box in the nursery. Sometimes Mother will be called in to advise about the present

being made for Father; sometimes there will be anxious shrieks when she comes near, for fear that she should see something not intended for her eyes till Christmas morning. Even small children can make little presents for their friends —a bracelet of beads for Mother, a stamp-tray or pipe-tray from a box-lid for Father, a match-box toy for a baby sister, and so on—while the older children can make raffia baskets or do pieces of embroidery or fretwork as presents for their friends.

Then, too, there are poorer children to remember at Christmas-time—toys which the child has outgrown can be mended up and packed in boxes made gay with scraps. I think we should be very careful that our children only give away toys that are really of use and in attractive condition. Sometimes a child is allowed to think that any old toy is good enough for those less fortunate, and thus gains at the very beginning of life a false idea of what constitutes Charity.

There are decorations to be made as well as presents—nuts to be gilded and ornaments cut out of blue, gold, red, silver and green paper to make the Christmas-tree gay. It is fun to make "sweet-chains," wrapping each sweet in a gay paper and stitching a sweet on thread at regular intervals. The children can help in cutting out biscuits in dough in the shape of stars, half-moons, mannikins and diamonds, and can decorate them, before they go down in trays

to the oven to be baked, with hundreds and thousands, stoned raisins, sweets and comfits and almonds.

There are Christmas carols, reflecting the very spirit of Christmas, which children will love to learn, that they may sing them on Christmas Eve to Mother and Father, uncles and aunts. An inexpensive collection is published by Novello, and Christmas songs, amongst others, are to be found in that charming song-book, "In Songland with Children," compiled by Carey Bonner. There are also many attractive Christmas plays in which even tiny children can take part. Good plays are published for a few pence each by Steads, famous for their "Books for the Bairns," and by Wells, Gardner, Darton.

Use could be made of many Christmas customs to be found on the continent. In Holland and Germany, Santa Claus pays a visit just before supper one evening, about four weeks before Christmas Day. In he comes with his long white beard glistening with hoar-frost, his fur cap and red coat touched with snow, his sack full of apples, nuts and sweets. Sometimes he bears a small Christmas tree, bright with tinsel, and then the small children have no doubt at all that he really is the authentic S. Nicholas. Even seven or eight-year-olds are not quite sure if Santa Claus is a fable or not, and older children, even if they do not believe in him, enjoy his visit. Father Christmas takes a kindly interest in the welfare of each small person, asks about

school, asks about conduct during the year, asks about the present every child desires. Then he empties his sack of goodies out on the floor and departs as suddenly as he came.

The visit of Santa Claus stimulates any spirits that might be inclined to lag and preparations for the great day go on apace. The atmosphere is charged with surprises and secrets. There is the turkey to be bought and the Christmas shopping to do. Every now and then little toys appear on the tea-table, or perhaps a dish of manikin cakes or a tiny figure of Santa Claus on each plate. These little treats all show the child that his mother and father are doing their part in promoting Christmas cheer by planning to make their children happy.

It is well if the mother can devote some extra time to her children round the Christmas season. A story-circle should certainly be one of the events in the day's programme. There are so many stories to tell. Pre-eminent, of course, is the story of the Nativity. Children never tire of hearing the stories of the journey of Mary and Joseph, of the Shepherds and the Wise Men, most of all of the tiny Baby in his rough cradle. It is wonderful to them to feel that the birth of the Babe still makes the world so glad, although it happened hundreds of years ago. Myths and legends also have their place—the charming Eskimo myth of How the Robin got his Red Breast, and the story of Why the Evergreen Trees Never Lose their Leaves (both found in

Florence Holbrook's Nature Myths, published by Harrap) never fail to attract. There is Grimm's "Fir Tree" also, and many stories of wintertime and Christmas are to be found in Emilie Poulsson's "In the Child's World." In a book called, "For the Children's Hour," by Carolyn Bailey and Clara Lewis (published by Geo. Philip), there are ten Christmas stories and six stories of winter, all of which children will enjoy.

When Christmas Eve comes, there will be great bustle and excitement in many a household. There is the Christmas-tree to be dressed, and while the grown-ups are closeted with the tree, the children can decorate the rest of the house with holly and ivy and mistletoe. Then the boys and girls may be called in, and there will be a time of revelry. Children love to dance round the tree with its gay lighted candles, its sparkling tinsel, its nuts and apples and oranges. Christmas hymns and carols can be sung as they dance. There is one charming story, too, which is especially suitable to tell round the Christmas-tree. It is called "The Golden Cobwebs," and is to be found in Sara Cone Bryant's "Stories to Tell Children." [1]

On the continent a Christmas-tree service for the children is often held on Christmas Eve, and they receive their presents in Church. In England this is never done, but there is certainly no reason why some small Christmas service should not take place in the schoolroom or

[1] Harrap, 4s. 6d.

nursery. Presents could be given either on Christmas Eve or in the morning itself.

Christmas Day and Boxing Day pass all too quickly. The children gradually begin to settle down. Another slight excitement comes when the Christmas-tree is taken down on New Year's Eve. The remaining apples and sweets and biscuits are shared out, there are some games, singing and dancing to celebrate the close of the Christmas season.

But though Christmas is over, its effects will linger through the year. Children who have experienced Christmas in the full sense will have learned something of the joy of giving happiness to others. When they are "old and full of years," and review their lives again, some of their most vivid and happy memories will be of Christmas at Home.

CHAPTER XXX

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT MORAL TRAINING

THE whole of this book, considered from one point of view, is concerned with moral training. Children are not taught nature study, for example, merely in order that they may acquire some biological knowledge, useful as this undoubtedly is to all who live seriously. It is our aim rather to lead the child's interest away from himself to a recognition of the great laws that govern the universe and to help him to conform to these laws. We do not teach handwork merely in order to amuse the child, to "keep him good." Rather we help him, through handwork, to utilise his powers in the most suitable directions and, through giving him opportunity to make effort and the right materials to work with, to realise the joy of creation. As has been reiterated many times, we are mainly concerned in early childhood in building up strong bodies and sturdy characters. Intellectual training is primarily useful in developing the powers of concentration and observation, in forming habits of thought, in engendering love of work, and in providing exercise for certain qualities of mind and character. Compared with this, the mere acquisition of information is of little value.

Moral training is of supreme importance. Unless the mother has some fundamental underlying principles in the work of training her children, all her efforts to provide a splendid environment for them must fail; all the bricks requisite to build a house may be placed in the right position but without the mortar to hold them together (here represented by a philosophy of life that welds together all our thoughts about education and influences our interpretation of every new fact) the house is apt at any moment to fall to pieces.

The great principle to bear in mind in moral training is that we cannot give to our children any ideals we do not ourselves hold. In later years, the children, arrived at an age of discretion, may build ideals for themselves on the groundwork we have laid, but in the early years they are solely dependent upon us for their philosophy. Every single reaction between ourselves and our children is subtly tinged by our own attitude to life; the whole system on which a child is brought up is influenced by the dominating principle of the parents' lives. For instance, the hedonist, if he is fond of his children, will both consciously and unconsciously strive to secure for them the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of pain, no matter what theories he holds intellectually. The ascetic, loving his children just as fondly and possibly in a more sublimated fashion, will early innure them to a life of hardship. The religious mother, even

if she never speaks a direct word concerning her religion to her children—though such a position is difficult to imagine—will, nevertheless, imbue them with faith. The fundamentally irreligious, no matter how much dogma she may teach, will never succeed in giving any idea of what religion really means. Likewise the woman who believes that conduct should be governed solely by motives of expedience will never be able to help her children to grow through the infantile philosophy that postulates : " All that is pleasant is good ; all that is unpleasant is evil."

The absurdity, therefore, of advocating any *system* of moral training is clearly evident. Every parent makes his or her own gift to the child—it may be a valuable gift, the presentation of a point of view which will help the child to face life valiantly and with courage ; it may be worthless or even definitely bad—the presentation of a false philosophy which holds him back from the pursuit of life, which impedes him in his search for truth. Of course, the point of view of every individual is modified by the ideals and ideas of the age in which he lives ; certain ideas are current, and are caught up unconsciously by all who are in touch with the outside world. New views as to the training of children necessarily arise in every age. But although all this is true, the feeling-tone of the parent (or the person who is most in contact with the child) and the atmosphere of the home, are the dominant factors in the educative situation. Each man

interprets facts and principles in the light of his own fundamental view of life and his application of them is subject to important modifications from his own outlook. Dr. Harry Roberts expresses an idea similar to that formulated here when he writes in his "Mother's Advice Book," "In the case of all well-balanced people, to whom all life is and ever has been a . . . conscious shaping towards ideals and the framing of a point of view the practical responsibilities of parentage lead on naturally from well-thought out theories and anticipations. They are like the traveller who sets out definitely to attain certain things, rather than the one to whom all adventure comes as the result of a happy-go-lucky chance." The words of one of America's great social workers, Dr. Miriam van Waters, are also worth considering in this connection. Her work lies amongst the young delinquents of the juvenile courts; it is her task to cure the sick souls of the children who commit crime. And all through her new book, "Youth in Conflict," in which she tells of her experiences with these so-called "criminal children," she emphasises the part played by the home in their education. "Parents by vigour and clarity of thought," she says in describing the normal home, "furnish their children with a guiding line." And again, "The task of the family is to develop admiration for behaviour codes that mean preservation and the health of the family." And again, "Parents must discover what ideas and morals they can hold to

without pretence and hypocrisy, reduce the remainder to clear statement, cease fretting and 'nagging,' and the children who in reality have the same outlook as the parents, begin to understand and respect the family point of view."

The most important part of moral training then is the presentation of a point of view—not one that is merely "held," but one that is lived. This must be formulated in the parents' own minds through the experience gained in living, through religious experience, through reading and study, through individual thought. Having attained it they need not—and should not—make any effort to enforce the same views on their children. By seeing certain principles put into daily practice in the home, the child inevitably and unconsciously acquires a philosophy. He sets out with the view of life he obtains in the home, and when he goes out into the world, he is able to build on this and go further.

The educator has obviously little help to give here. He cannot be expected to take the responsibility of prescribing a philosophy, of deciding for the parent whether pleasure is the highest good or whether this is to be found in self-abnegation, religion, self-control. Even if he did take the responsibility of enunciating certain arbitrary principles with regard to a philosophy of life, it would not profit children. The parents might believe him and endeavour to put into practice with their children the right ideals, but their work would carry no conviction

with it. An "attitude" is no use in dealing with children; they are always intuitive enough to sense the difference between a living conviction and one that is merely intellectual.

But once parents have evolved their own philosophy—possibly with pain and certainly with difficulty—the educator can help a great deal. Supposing, for example, a man decides that work is the highest good, and that this truth is the one above all others that he wishes to teach his boy—a very inadequate philosophy this, but one that will serve for illustration—the educator may do both father and son great service in pointing out certain fundamental needs and characteristics of children. "If you wish your boy of six to love work," he may justifiably say, "you will not set him at this age to Latin and Greek, nor will you expect him to spend long hours in the school-room; you will best develop love of work by doing this and this." Our second tenet in moral training, then, is to take into consideration the child's stage of development. You must know a child's powers, a child's outlook, a child's standard, before you can form any idea of his standard of conduct. And only observation, sympathy, understanding, *love*, coupled with psychological knowledge and insight, are of any use in formulating the correct ethics of the nursery.

At the same time, there are certain measures in the moral training of children which have been found by experience to be successful.

First, for healthy moral and intellectual development, the child's quiet must be zealously guarded. His environment must be planned specially for him, even if this entails much sacrifice on the part of the mother. This does not necessarily mean elaborate apparatus, but it does mean a place of rest and regular, unbroken routine. It is the mother's duty to obtain for her children, as Dorothy Canfield Fisher remarks, "a perfectly regular, even, tranquil life, with absolutely no adult excitements." And this writer promises "if such a régime is rigorously adhered to, in the ordinary family, ninety per cent. of the difficulty of disciplining little children would be entirely obviated. They learn to obey unconsciously, because they are never asked to exercise their will power and self control when their sensitive little nerves are at the breaking-point from fatigue and excitement." But if this happy state of affairs is to be achieved, there must be no long shopping expeditions, no showing off to visitors, no "treats" involving late and irregular hours or unsuitable food.

Of course within the child's own environment there must be plenty of fun—fun of the kind we suggest in the chapter on Nursery Festivals—plenty of joy, and above all *abundant opportunity for mental activity*. So often "naughtiness," like the "cameelious hump," is the result of having too little to do. That is the reason I have outlined in my chapter on "The Child at Home," and in other chapters of this book, a *busy* routine

for the young child. I have advocated that he be allowed to help in the house, never checked in helpfulness however clumsy his efforts. I have advocated plenty of mental interest and opportunities for inventive and creative play.

Forbid as little as possible. That is another very important principle to bear in mind. Too many children are constantly heckled, their creative activity is quenched by being ordered not to do this and not to do that. In the well-organised home with an understanding mother, there should be little need for this. If your child wants to play with a puddle, it is obvious that he is trying to attain some mastery of water. Why then, snatch him away from so educative an occupation ? Let him put on his mackintosh and continue with his play, or if the puddle is insanitary, give him a bowl of clean water to experiment with instead. This principle can be carried through all your work with your children. Remember that they are all the time bent on educating themselves, look for the educative element in their play, and you will save yourself much nerve-strain and your child many tears.

Remember, too, that if children are to develop sturdy character, they must have reasonable opportunity to fight. Give the child time to overcome his own difficulties, don't be too anxious to " help " ; give him time to seek—and find—solutions of his own problems. I have given an example of this at the beginning of my

chapter on "Misunderstood children." The function of the home is to provide an environment in which the child meets difficulties that are *just* within his power to surmount. He is obviously unfit, in the early years, for the grown-up conflict in the great world, but he must be prepared for this by some preliminary practice on a small scale, in the limited environment we call the home. "The child struggling from infancy to win affection and esteem from each member of the family, is," as Dr. van Waters remarks, "living in a world of conflict. This is healthy. This is splendid. The normal child should earn his way by acts and attitudes which are pleasing to good parents and bring rewards of approval, success and love. It is conflict which makes life interesting." But she goes on, "the conflict should not be unequal; nor should demands be harsh or evil or beyond the powers of the child."

What conflicts are unequal? What sort of demands are too harsh and too great? The most obvious kind of conflict arises in the home where parents are selfish and subordinate the interests of the child to their own. They expose the child to conditions he should not meet and mar his character by forcing him to put up a fight he cannot possibly win. The mother who takes her young child a long journey across London merely in order to visit friends, for instance, is causing him undue fatigue and is directly responsible for the storm of tears and temper

which generally ensues and which, try as he will, he is physically unable to control.

Again, there may be conflict between the mother's personality and that of the child. That is unjustifiable. Any healthy normal child will put up a fight against excessive domination, against being "kept a baby," against demands that he intuitively perceives to be unreasonable. He should not be required to do so. The mother must know herself thoroughly and examine her motives frequently if she is to be a humane and successful disciplinarian. She must not tyrannise under the impression that she is teaching obedience. She must not make the child do certain actions merely because she wishes this, but always because they are right.

The conflict aroused by jealousy is another that should be avoided. The interests of one child must not be put before another or injury will be done to the character of both.

Above all, the child must be allowed neither to see, nor even to sense conflict between his parents. Psychologists have shown us that children do worry greatly if the relations between their parents are unsatisfactory, and there is no more fruitful cause of naughtiness than childish worry. Bed-wetting, stealing, lying, and worse faults than these are often the outward symptoms of a distress the child should not feel. There is an object lesson for all parents in the fact that many young criminals spring from unhappy marriages. Mothers and fathers must get down

to rock-bottom with each other, cherish the same ideals, work in their different ways for the same principles before they can hope to produce sturdy, happy, mentally and morally healthy children.

And so we come again to the importance of the atmosphere and the outlook of the home. And again we enunciate the great principle that we must, at any rate, *begin* to set our own houses in order before attempting to help with the building of our children's houses. The mother's work, fully interpreted, is to form an ideal of life, to share it with her husband, to co-operate with him in building a home fit for their children to live in, in the light of that ideal. In this she is aided by her psychological knowledge, and she must train herself to make every action subserve that ideal. Then, indeed, she will find life absorbing. Then indeed, even if she seldom leaves her own village, will she be living the whole of life. She will fulfil her life work, and as with the virtuous woman of the Proverbs, "her children will rise up and call her blessed."

CHAPTER XXXI

REWARDS OF MOTHERHOOD

I HAVE demanded, in these pages, certain conditions for children—the provision of a suitable environment in which to unfold, the preservation of a peaceful atmosphere, the opportunity for mental and physical activity. I have advised the elimination of arbitrary and violent methods of correction. I have pointed out the need for a living ideal in the home. And I know that motherhood, interpreted in its broadest sense, is far from being an easy job. It is certainly not easy (though it is possible, for I have seen it done) to keep up spiritual *morale*, everyday work, an educative outlook and psychological reading and observation all at the same time.

But in the very difficulty of the work lies its glory. The mother like every other truly creative worker, gets even more out of life than she puts into it.

She does not reap material reward. For a portion of her life she must, to a certain extent, cut herself off from the life of the world in order to cherish Life in the cradle and the nursery. As every educated woman should, the wise mother keeps up her interests through news-

papers and books, through her communication with husband and friends, but even so her home life is of paramount importance to her, and the demands of the world of only secondary importance compared with the demands of the children.

Yet physically, mentally and morally her motherhood makes her a happier woman. This fact is often overlooked to-day. We lose sight of the meaning of motherhood in our obsession with the practical every-day difficulties of the mother's work. That is why I want to point out some of the rewards of motherhood, some of the features that make motherhood not only worth while but the happiest and most wonderful profession on earth for the great majority of women.

Motherhood is worth while even from the purely biologic point of view. The reproductive instinct requires satisfaction as well as any other. That is why, from the physical standpoint alone, the pain of childbirth has its full compensations.

Closely connected with this—for psychology and physiology are very intimately related—is the increased healthfulness and vigour of the woman who has borne children. There are women who suffer from various ills after the birth of their first child and who trace all their troubles to this source, but in most cases this is due either to neglect of health during pregnancy or to lack of proper care and attention after the birth of the baby. And it is a fact of common experience that mothers of families are frequently more vigorous and youthful than unmarried women

of the same age. It has been proved also, that women who have suckled children are less liable than other women to such diseases as cancer.

But when I spoke of "Rewards of Motherhood," I did not mean purely physical motherhood. The mother who looks at her work only from this point of view, whose mind is completely absorbed with such matters as the making or washing of woollies or the child's food, will surely degenerate into a drudge. She is concentrating only on producing a splendid animal, and though health is of very great importance and good or bad physique has its bearing on character, the mother who thinks only of the physical well-being of her children misses most of the joy of motherhood. I think that, ideally speaking, every mother should have some scientific knowledge of food values, I think she should know something of child-physiology, something of hygiene, but these things are not in themselves sufficient.

Motherhood, interpreted in its fullest sense, should also bring new intellectual interests. Every mother is in a position to watch the mind of her baby unfolding. She has a natural sympathy with her own child, and her intuition backs up her intelligence when she observes him. She has an instinctive sympathy with the new little life; she travels with the child through each new experience. There are numerous books to help her to understand the psychology of her little one. I found Millicent Shinn's "Biography of

a Baby " of the greatest interest during the first days of my baby's life, and Sully's " Extracts from a Father's Diary," is also very helpful. As the child reached the age of two or three, his mental development is even more absorbing, and there is any amount of literature of interest to the mother.

Knowledge acquired from actual observation of a living creature is absorbed and retained much more easily than academic knowledge gathered merely from books. It becomes part of the mother's personality. Her interest in psychology once quickened, is likely to remain with her long after her children have grown up and her life becomes fuller and richer in consequence. She acquires the habit of studying human nature and grows in understanding of adults as well as of children. This applies also to other facts learned in bringing up boys and girls. Every bit of knowledge gathered on questions of health is applied practically, and can never be forgotten just because it has been applied. Then, too, the mother who conscientiously tries to answer her small child's questions will learn through her reading for information a good deal of practical science, and to answer these questions consistently she is driven to formulate for herself some kind of a philosophy of life. In searching for beautiful stories and myths to tell her little ones she learns much of literature. In fact, the subjects which figure most in the education of the toddler and the kindergarten child—litera-

ture, nature-study, handwork—are just those which enhance the beauty and joy of everyday life. Earl Barnes expresses it thus: "If children come to bless the homes of men and women, even intellectual life shifts to a higher level than was before possible. With advancing years, intellectual interests tend to become specialised. The man or woman gives up singing, ceases to be interested in plant life, stops reading poetry. One activity after another is cut off and interests concentrate in some comparatively small field of work or pleasure. But when a child comes, the parents are forced to start over the round of human interests and thought once more. Before, they lived it as children; now they live the cycle as grown-up men and women. No matter how completely a woman has given up music, she will some day find herself singing when she holds her baby in her arms. As she recites Mother Goose and the fairy and folk lore tales, she moves through the path of man's upward progress, led by a child, but with the life and understanding of adult years. As she walks with her children in the garden and in the fields, she is driven to a new interpretation of the world of nature. Few things can so broaden, quicken and enrich the intellectual life as growing up with one's children."

But the intellectual rewards of intelligent, enlightened motherhood, great as these are, are as nothing compared to the moral reward. The

greatest gift a child brings to his mother is that of *unification*. The happy individual is not he who has achieved freedom from care, who lives in circumstances that make effort unnecessary, but the one whose every action and whose whole life is inspired by a big principle. The sculptor, the doctor, the poet, who consecrate themselves to their work, are happy because they find in that work an abiding stimulus to action. But there can be no greater stimulus to action, no bigger incentive to effort than a living child—*everything* the mother does has its effect on the child. What she *is* is equally important. No matter how tenderly a woman serves her child, he will not grow up tender and gentle unless the whole atmosphere in which he lives is serene. No matter how well she teaches him, he will not —indeed cannot—follow her teachings unless he sees by her example that she believes in them. No child grows up truthful, however much the virtue of truthfulness has been instilled into him by precept, if his mother considers herself justified in telling him white lies. It is true of the mother, perhaps more than of any other creative worker, that "there is no life outside one's life work." Recognition of this fact brings the fullest, deepest happiness any one can know.

Unity and stability are essential qualities of a strong character. Thus the child unconsciously develops character in his mother. Forethought, consideration, care in the performance of every detail, are also developed in the mother.

She cannot care successfully for a living creature unless she develops these—any intelligent young mother with her first baby quickly realises that. Slight neglect may lead to disastrous results.

The child gives his mother an all-absorbing interest. I am well aware that I challenge criticism in saying this—it is very generally thought that a woman should avoid too great an absorption in her children, lest she become petty and immersed in the petty details of children's lives. If complete absorption is purely domestic, this must be wholly bad. The children grow up, and no longer need their mother in the same way, and when they cease to be physically dependent upon her, she has no other interests to fall back upon. But if the absorption in the child has its due proportion of intellectual and spiritual elements, if the mother is interested in her child in his relation to life, if she follows the development of his character, his mental growth, she has plenty of interests to fall back upon when her children leave her. She is the *richer* in intellectual interests for having had children.

She is the richer also in personality. "The essence of truth, of reality, of health," said Dr. William Brown in his lecture in National Baby Week, 1925, "is going out beyond ourselves, living outside ourselves. That is what personality in the end amounts to. Mere individuality is something that has to be overcome." Through the birth of a child, many a woman has

taken her first steps towards the development of personality. Instead of being absorbed in herself, with the true mother, as Ellen Key says, "her soul is filled by the child."

So often we expect children to be grateful for what we do for them. Obviously children should be brought up—by example rather than precept—to be happily thankful for all the simple lovely things of life, but let us not forget what the child does for us. He is a constant stimulus to make everyday life dignified and lovely; he is a constant incentive to effort; his simple innocent way of viewing the world, his happiness in simple pleasures, his desire to learn, make him our teacher.

Above all, he makes possible the working together of a man and woman who love each other.

After the birth of the first child life is never quite the same again. In the first sacred days after child-birth, the purely physical passion between a happily-mated man and woman is quiescent, and the essential enduring qualities of manliness and womanliness—the protectiveness on his part, the tenderness and receptiveness on hers—are refined out. In these days they live in very close communion without feeling the need for bodily contact. In these days they are enabled to see which are the enduring elements in their love, and they never quite lose the vision in the days that follow. Thus the child who is the result of physical union helps them towards

the vision of the eternal. And this enlarged, spiritual, forward-looking view of life, brought to birth with the child, constantly stimulated in the years that follow, is the greatest of all the rewards of parenthood.

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